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ABSTRACT

Developed as a resource for providers concerned with issues of parent involvement and family support, this manual offers ways to successfully involve parents in day care. It provides detailed descriptions of tested approaches to parent involvement, including practical tips and implementation strategies, in order to help programs adapt a given approach to their unique situations. The first of six chapters included in the manual defines parent involvement, highlights some of the benefits which occur when parents are involved in day care programs, and discusses some common stumbling blocks encountered, as well as some possible solutions. The second chapter provides information on where to start with parents, including setting realistic goals and assessing parent needs and community resources. Information about how to set the stage for effective parent involvement--including successful communication and observation techniques--is offered in the third chapter. The fourth chapter provides a conceptual framework for examining the two major categories of parent involvement in day care: programs supporting parents and parents in supporting programs. The fifth chapter describes illustrative models or approaches to involving parents in day care programs. Presentation of each model includes a definition of the model; a description of its functional goals; a list of implementation steps; a discussion of benefits associated with the model, along with an examination of likely problems and their solutions; and suggestions for resources needed to successfully implement the model. The sixth and final chapter provides an annotated bibliography of parent involvement resources. (MP)

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DAY CARE

A Resource Manual for Day Care Providers

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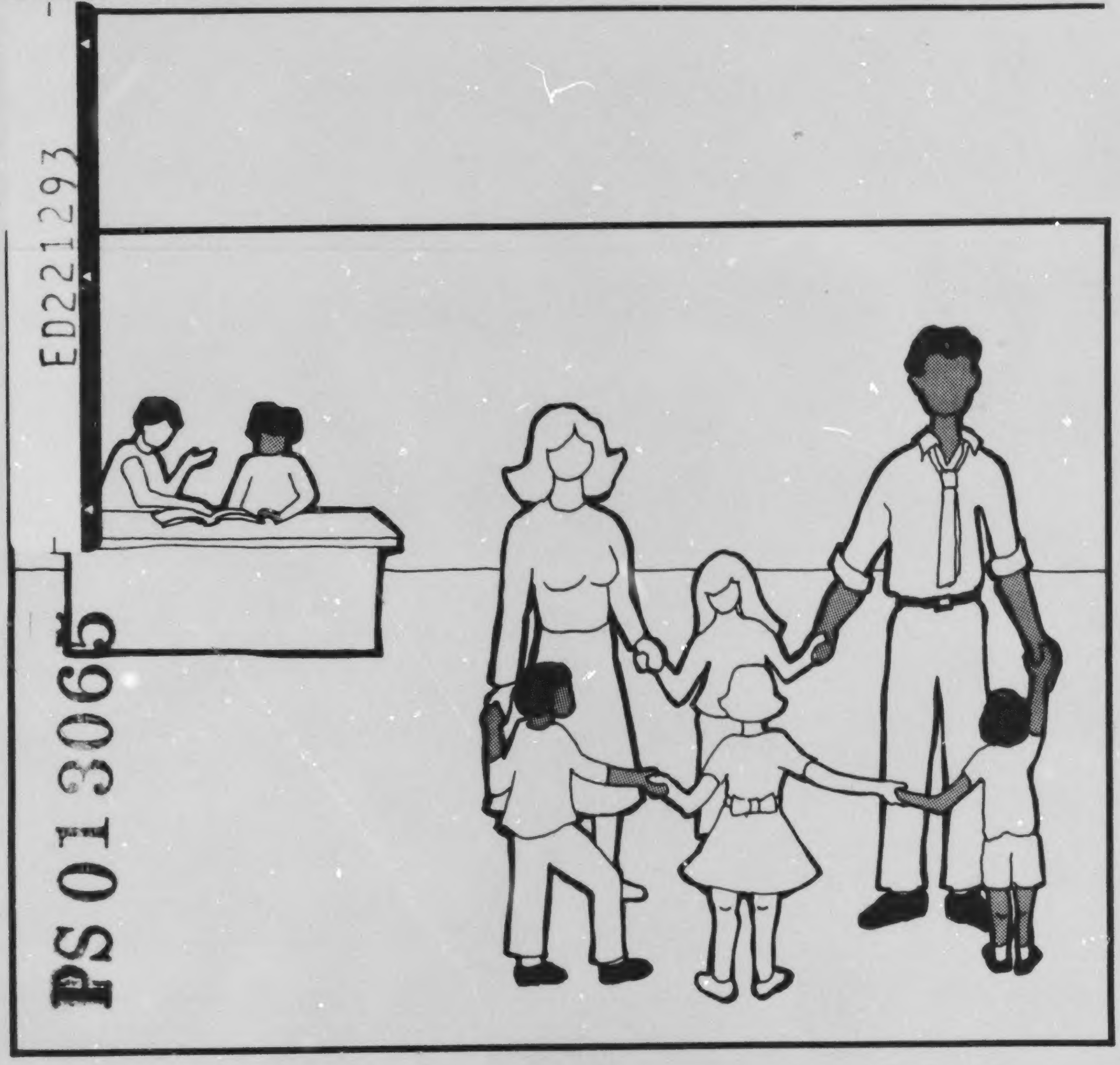

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DAY CARE

A Resource Manual for Day Care Providers

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Faye E. Coleman, Ph.D.
Project Director

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps more than any other single group of people, day care providers are keenly aware of the ever increasing demand for quality, affordable day care services. All indications are that this demand will continue to grow in the years to come, as women continue to enter the labor force in record numbers. This increased demand for day care, coupled with the shrinking day care funds which characterize today's economy, has proven to be a never ending challenge. In response to this challenge, many providers are looking with renewed interest at ways to enhance parent involvement in their programs. Recognizing that parent involvement is as much a component of quality care as are the curriculum, staff and facilities, these providers are eager to find and use interesting, innovative approaches to parent involvement in their day care settings.

Yet meaningful parent involvement in day care is often difficult to achieve and sustain. Many programs which have involved parents for years in fundamental ways are struggling to sustain that basic involvement from one year to the next. Just as day care itself takes on more and more varieties, such as before- and after-school care, employer sponsored care, sick care, 24 hour care, etc., so too must providers look for new and increasingly innovative ways to involve parents meaningfully in their programs.

WHY A RESOURCE MANUAL ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT?

This comprehensive manual on parent involvement was developed as a resource for providers who are struggling with issues of parent involvement and family support. It is the product of a two year research and demonstration project, funded by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) to improve the quality of day care services in states by encouraging meaningful parent involvement in day care programs. This manual is a practical document which offers ways to successfully involve parents in day care. It provides descriptions of tried and tested approaches to parent involvement, including practical tips and implemention strategies, in sufficient detail to allow programs to adopt or adapt a given approach to their unique situations. The information contained in the manual was compiled from a variety of sources, all of which represent geographically and programmatically diverse segments of the day care public and widely varying day care settings. Each of the approaches or models described in the manual has been proven effective in supporting families, involving parents, and generally building and strengthening the cooperative relationship between providers, programs, and parents.

Twelve of the 14 models and approaches described in the manual were field tested recently by day care providers throughout the country. The field test participants—both providers and parents—represented the broad spectrum and diversity of day care nationally. The results of these model demonstrations gave us a rich reservoir of useful information upon which to draw in preparing this resource manual.

Although comprehensive in nature, the manual is not intended to be all inclusive, for it is impossible to describe in one document every day care program that is meaningfully involving parents in all facets of its operations. Rather, the manual seeks to offer blueprints of successful approaches to parent involvement which might be implemented by many programs in varying ways. It is intended for providers, both family day care providers and those in day care centers, for parents, and for those individuals at the State level responsible for assisting day care providers in upgrading the quality of day care. An additional resource for State day care specialists is the **Trainer's Guide to Parent Involvement in Day Care,** designed as a companion document to this resource manual.

HOW THE MANUAL IS ORGANIZED

This manual is divided into six chapters. The first chapter defines parent involvement, highlights some of the benefits which occur when parents are involved in day care programs, and discusses some common stumbling blocks encountered, as well as some possible solutions. Chapter 2 provides some clues on where to start with parent involvement, including setting realistic goals and assessing parent needs and community resources. Information about how to set the stage for effective parent involvement—including successful communication and observation techniques—is offered in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides a useful conceptual framework for examining the two major categories of parent involvement in day care: programs supporting parents and parents supporting programs. Chapter 5 contains illustrative models or approaches to involving parents in day care programs. Chapter 6 is an annotated bibliography of parent involvement resources.

CHAPTER 1. WHAT IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN DAY CARE?

Parent involvement in day care refers to the mutually beneficial partnership between parents and providers that serves to create positive and wholesome environments in which children can thrive. When good relationships between parents and providers exist, much of the fear and anxiety that children experience when they leave home is diminished. Parent involvement includes a variety of activities designed to enhance the day care experience for providers, parents, and children.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

As a provider of day care, parent involvement may not be your most important issue. There are a number of concerns and problems most day care providers focus on before they are able to consider ways to enhance parent involvement in their programs. Yet parent involvement has been shown to have tremendous benefits in dealing with many of the following common concerns and problems:

- provider burnout and staff turnover—the ongoing need to provide for staff development in order to enchance skills and increase job satisfaction;
- the burden on providers of continually shouldering the responsibilities of running a day care program alone;
- the sense of isolation due to lack of contact with other adults—especially true of family home mothers;
- parental dependency on the provider for information or resources they need and for emotional support;
- funding problems—the continual problem of raising adequate funds to replace equipment and supplies, to pay salaries, or to build or rent a new facility;
- obtaining and sustaining community support for local child care programs and for day care as a national priority;
- dealing with State funding and licensing agencies;
- dealing with behavior problems due to differences in child rearing practices;
- lack of consistency in child rearing practices of providers and parents; and
- the need to continually revitalize the curriculum.

Another area of concern is the quality of the day care experience for children and their parents. Parent involvement activities can help overcome some of the following problems experienced by parents and children:

- separation anxiety;
- guilty feelings of parents about leaving their child in day care to go to work;
- confusion the child experiences because of inconsistent rules between home and school; and
- parental feelings of inadequacy in handling their children's behavior and promoting their learning.

When parents are meaningfully involved in their children's day care the quality of their personal relationships is often enhanced. There is a good deal of evidence suggesting that when children see their parents participating in their day care programs, their self-esteem flourishes and they grow cognitively and academically. Parent involvement activities can help strengthen families by reinforcing the importance of having positive, supportive interactions among family members. When parents are familiar with the content, routines, and activities of the day care program, they are less likely to feel anxious or guilty about being away from their children all day.

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT

If parent involvement makes so much sense for everyone involved, why is it so hard to achieve? In reality, there are a host of obstacles—some real, some perceived—which can stand in the way of successful parent involvement in day care. You may recognize some of the the following statements made by other providers and parents.

Parent

"I work all day. I don't have time to become involved in the day care program."

"My child acts up whenever I come to the classroom. It's better if I'm not there."

Provider

"It's easier to get the job done myself than to organize parents to do it."

"I don't understand why these parents don't show more interest in what's going on in their child's classroom."

Parent

"I wouldn't know what to look for in choosing a day care program. I go by recommendations of people I know."

"I don't have any special skills to offer the day care program."

Provider

"Parents pay me to take care of their children and depend on me to be the expert. How can I ask them to make decisions about the program?"

"I can't count on my parents. They rarely show up at meetings and don't seem interested in the program."

While these and other barriers to successful parent involvement are very real, they are rarely insurmountable. Responses will vary depending on the particular situation. For example, providers faced with parents who say they have no time to become involved in their child's day care program have responded to this barrier in a variety of ways:

- A family home mother in Washington occasionally invites parents to stay for dinner and talk about mutual concerns.
- Home-school notes are used effectively by many day care providers to ensure ongoing communication.

- One provider takes small groups of children to visit parents at work.
- One provider distributed a schedule of when Footsteps would be on the local TV station and found that parents spontaneously asked for an opportunity to discuss the programs as a group.
- A director of a large center in Virginia requires ten hours of work from each parent during the year and offers parents a choice of what they want to do.
- Teachers at one center make periodic phone calls to parents to discuss their children's progress.
- Many providers use birthdays and holidays to involve parents in planning parties for the children.
- In developing a resource guide, a provider in New York sent out a brief questionnaire to solicit parents' suggestions on what should be included and to track down information.

There are many other creative and effective solutions to handling the problem of parents who have little time to give to parent involvement activities. This manual is designed to confront the obstacles to parent involvement by offering practical ideas and examples of approaches which have led to successful parent participation in day care. The suggestions offered include simple activities and ideas which require no more than a commitment of two or three minutes to those which require more resources and time to set up and maintain.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The next chapter is entitled **"Where Do I Begin?"** We suggest that a good place to start is to take a look at where you are and where you want to go. Chapter 2, therefore, offers practical ideas for assessing your own situation, developing goals, and evaluating what you do.

Chapter 3, **"Setting the Stage,"** illustrates how good communication is the foundation for successful parent involvement. Inviting parents to observe the day care program is one way to establish a good basis of understanding. Practical tips and strategies are offered on how to ensure good communication and meaningful parental observations of the day care program.

The remaining chapters outline parent involvement activities and approaches. Chapter 4, **"Avenues of Parent Involvement"** describes the informal ways in which parents support providers and providers support parents. Chapter 5, **"Illustrative Models"** contains illustrative models or approaches to involving parents. Chapter 6, **"A Select Bibliography of Parent Involvement Resources"** contains selected listings for providers who wish to read more extensively on the topics presented. To facilitate your efforts to locate information, activities and models relevant to the common concerns and problems discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the following index is offered.

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CHAPTER 2. *WHERE DO I BEGIN?*

As a provider of day care services, you are already promoting parent involvement. A good place to begin, therefore, is to look at what parent involvement practices already exist and to decide how you want to expand and increase your activities. You may want to ask questions such as the following:

- What do I do every day to involve parents in their child's day care experience?
- In what ways are parents already contributing to my program?
- What do the parents see as their needs and interests?
- Who are the parents I never hear from?
- Who are the children I feel need extra help adjusting to the day care program?
- How can parents help me?
- Where can I find additional resources to support my parent involvement activities?

IDENTIFYING PARENT INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES THAT ALREADY EXIST

If we are not careful, we could easily overlook the many ways that parents are already involved. The fact is that most day care providers have been involving parents in their programs in one way or another since their inception. For example, all of the day care programs that participated in this project's pilot test, regardless of their type or size, reported that some form of parent involvement activities occurred regularly in their programs and almost half said these activities had been in place for several years.

As you read through this manual, you will learn about approaches to parent involvement which are new to you, but you will also recognize many of the activities. It is important not to minimize the everyday parent involvement practices; they can be as meaningful as offering a course on child development.

For example, some of the parent involvement practices that occur all the time in many day care programs include the following: using drop-off and pick-up times to talk about the children; making phone calls on a regular basis; encouraging parents to drop in for lunch with their child;

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exchanging personal notes and sending newsletters home; having parent lounges or bulletin boards; social functions like pot luck suppers or fashion shows; conducting parent workshops and many others.

One of the ways to begin using this manual is to make a list of the parent involvement practices you have already implemented. A form is included for you on the following page. (Figure 1.)

In looking over the list of your parent involvement activities, it may be helpful to ask yourself, "How did these practices get started?" and "Are they meeting needs which still exist?" The better you know the parents and your own needs, the easier it will be to respond to these questions.

FIGURE 1

EXISTING PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

DAILY INFORMAL ACTIVITIES WHICH INVOLVE PARENTS:

Example: Chats during drop-off or pick-up times.

WAYS IN WHICH I SUPPORT PARENTS:

Example: Monthly newsletter on program activities.

WAYS IN WHICH PARENTS SUPPORT ME:

Example: Organizing a fundraising fair every spring.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR PARENTS

Whether your program is center-based or home-based, the parent involvement activities you plan will be most successful if they are designed to suit the parents you want to involve. Knowing your parents helps you to plan. In setting up a meeting time, for example, it is helpful to know the work schedule of the parents you want to attend.

You probably already have a good understanding of your parent population. Some providers have found it useful to develop a parent profile to obtain more extensive information on parents. The following parent profile is offered as one example. (Figure 2.)

The information made available through parent profiles frequently gives you immediate clues to the most workable types of parent involvement activities. For example, if most of the families you serve have a large number of children, then a need for extended child care resources such as health programs, parent support programs, drop-in programs, or babysitting coops might be indicated.

FIGURE 2.

PARENT PROFILE

FAMILY INFORMATION

How many people live in the home? _____

How many children live in the home? _____

What are the children's ages? _____, _____, _____, _____

Do both parents live in the home? Yes _____ No _____

How old is the mother? _____ How old is the father? _____

WORK INFORMATION

Does the mother work? Yes _____ No _____

Full-time _____ Part-time _____

What are her hours? _____________________

Does she ever work on weekends? Yes _____ No _____

Does the father work? Yes _____ No _____

Full-time _____ Part-time _____

What are his hours? _____________________

Does he ever work on weekends? Yes _____ No _____

LANGUAGE

Are there languages, other than English, spoken in the home?
Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please list: _____________________

____

Name: ____

ASSESSING PARENT INTERESTS

Parents have their own ideas on what they need, what interests them, and what skills they have to offer.

Parent interest questionnaires are designed to assist you in finding out:
1) the type of leisure activities that parents would like to be involved in, 2) areas of support and personal development in which parents are interested, and 3) ways in which parents can serve as resources.

The following Parent Interest Questionnaire can be modified to meet the specific needs and interests of your parents. (Figure 3.)

FIGURE 3

PARENT INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

What types of social activities would you enjoy participating in with other parents and staff in our program?

____ a card party
____ family picnic
____ pot luck dinner
____ boat ride
____ other:
Please list ________________________

Would you help to plan social activities for parents and staff?
____ Yes
____ No

How often would you attend social activities at the center?
____ Weekly
____ Monthly
____ Every other month

HOBBIES

Would you like to learn:

____ sewing
____ basic carpentry
____ crocheting
____ knitting
____ photography
____ other

Do you or any family member have any particular skill like those listed above that you would teach to other parents? ____ Yes ____ No

What skills?

How often would you attend classes in your area of interest?

____ Weekly
____ Monthly
____ Every other month

PARENTING EDUCATION/FAMILY SUPPORT

Which of these topics would you like to receive information on? (Please check)

____ Child growth and development (understanding child development, discipline and other problem areas, activities to do at home to enhance children's development, other)

____ Adult education (classes and courses available, GED, junior college, college, scholarship information, other)

____ Employment (how to complete a job application, how to succeed in job interviews, job opportunities in the area, other)

____ Health education (recognizing and treating common childhood diseases, emergency first aid, safety in the home, family planning, pregnancy and childbirth, drug abuse and alcoholism, other)

____ Nutrition education (preparing inexpensive, nutritious meals; growing foods at home; how to get food stamps; weight control; forming food coops; other)

____ Resource management and use of community agencies (budgeting and stretching your dollar, services provided by community agencies, comparative shopping, other)

Can you provide printed information to other parents on any of the topics listed above?
____ Yes ____ No

Which topics?

Would you be willing to present a workshop on any of the topics listed above?
____ Yes ____ No

Which topics?

PARENT AVAILABILITY

Please check (X) the time and day *most* convenient for you to attend or conduct workshops, parent meetings, or other parent activities.

TIME **DAY**

__ Morning 9-12 __ Mon. __ Tues. __ Wed. __ Thurs. __ Fri. __ Sat. __ Sun.

___ Afternoon 1-4 ___ Mon. ___ Tues. ___ Wed. ___ Thurs. ___ Fri. ___ Sat. ___ Sun.

___ Evening 7-9:30 ___ Mon. ___ Tues. ___ Wed. ___ Thurs. ___ Fri. ___ Sat. ___ Sun.

Would you need transportation? ___ Yes ___ No

Would you need babysitting services? ___ Yes ___ No

Name of Mother: ______________________________

Name of Father: ______________________________

Date: ______________

ADMINISTERING QUESTIONNAIRES AND PROFILES

It is possible that you will look at the previous two forms and decide that because your program is small, you can obtain the same information informally. Family day care providers, or providers who serve only 10 to 15 families, have succeeded in learning about the parents' needs and family characteristics in some of the following ways:

- talking with them informally on a daily basis;
- asking for parents' interests at a parent/provider meeting;
- reviewing information obtained during intake;
- making home visits.

If you feel that the profile and questionnaire approach would be most useful in obtaining the specific information you seek, there are a variety of ways to proceed. Of utmost importance is the need to be sensitive to how parents may react to these forms. Many parents have been inundated with forms from health clinics, unemployment agencies or social service organizations. They may react to one more form with resentment and suspicion. Providers have suggested the following tips for alleviating parents' concerns and for ensuring that they obtain accurate and useful information:

- Complete the questionnaires in a face-to-face interview with parents rather than sending them home where forms are often lost or forgotten.
- Reassure parents that this is confidential information which will only be used to match parent involvement activities with parents' needs and interests and to schedule these activities at convenient and appropriate times.
- Design the forms so that they are clearly distinct from typical government forms:

  —use colorful paper;

  —decorate them with children's line drawings.

ASSESSING PROGRAM/PROVIDER NEEDS

After learning about the parents and assessing their needs and interests, it is equally important to assess *your* needs. Parent involvement, after all, is a partnership which should be mutually beneficial. You are in the best position to assess the needs of the day care program and how the parents can be supportive.

On the next page is a Provider Needs Assessment. (Figure 4.) You can fill it out at your desk or at a staff meeting, with input from other teachers.

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FIGURE 4

PROVIDER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

	OFTEN	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
Do you need additional help working directly with children:			
_____ in center or home			
_____ on field trips			
_____ other; specify			
Do you need program assistance with:			
_____ developing activities			
_____ preparing classroom materials			
_____ ordering films, equipment			
_____ other; specify			
Do you need help repairing or improving the building, such as:			
_____ painting			
_____ carpentry			
_____ plumbing or electrical work			
_____ building furniture or toys			
_____ general clean up			
_____ other			
Do you need management/administrative assistance, such as:			
_____ bookkeeping			
_____ training staff			
_____ hiring/firing staff			
_____ developing management procedures			
_____ recruiting children			
_____ fundraising			
_____ obtaining people to serve on a Board of Directors			
_____ arranging transportation			
_____ other			

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Most communities offer resources which would benefit both families and the day care program itself. By becoming acquainted with community parks, museums, and historic sites you can expand the daily routines to include field trips and other educational activities. Maintaining a list of phone numbers (emergency and non-emergency) for medical, legal, and social services is helpful for you as a provider and as a service to parents who often use the day care provider as an informational and referral resource.

Many communities already have excellent listings of community resources. Some places to check to see if an up-to-date resource directory already exists in your community are: your local public library, neighborhood or civic associations, community chest agencies, and the local public school. If you find that your community does not have an up-to-date resource directory, it is fairly simple to develop your own.

Developing a community resources directory containing names, addresses, and phone numbers is an excellent vehicle for parent involvement. Interested parents can be given a list of suggested resources and asked to expand it with ideas of their own. They can also call other parents to solicit additional ideas. The completed directory can then be distributed to all of the day care families. A sample Table of Contents is included on the following page (Figure 5.)

FIGURE 5.

BRIGHTON COMMUNITY RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Table of Contents

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Police (617) ___-_____
Fire Department (617) ___-_____
Ambulance (617) ___-_____

HEALTH CLINICS/HOSPITALS ....

CRISIS HOTLINES ....

(drug/alcohol abuse; rape clinics; child/spouse abuse, etc.)

LEGAL SERVICES ....

RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Recreation Association ....
Parks ....
Swimming Pools ....
Day Camps ....
Museums ....
Organized Tours/Tour Mobiles ....
Libraries ....

MASS TRANSIT

Buses ....
Subways ....
Taxis ....

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Churches ....
Synagogues ....
Mosques ....

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Boys/Girls Clubs ....
Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts ....
Girl Scouts/Campfire Girls ....
4H ....
Little League ....
YMCA/YWCA ....

BUSINESS AND SOCIAL CLUBS

Neighborhood Associations ....
Kiwanis ....
Rotary ....
Lions Club ....
Fraternities/Sororities ....
Chamber of Commerce ....

MAKING USE OF THE INFORMATION COMPILED AND SETTING GOALS

Having obtained a more detailed picture of your parent population, assessed their interests and skills, and examined the needs of the program itself, you are ready to make use of the information compiled. This is a crucial stage in the parent involvement process. It is very important to demonstrate to parents that you were serious about building your parent involvement program around real needs and issues. Experienced providers, therefore, suggest looking over the list of interests parents identified and selecting one activity that you can implement immediately. Pick one that will produce immediate rewards. For example, if parents want to be regularly informed about how their child is adjusting to day care and what he or she is doing, you may:

- develop a system for exchanging home/school notes once a week;
- regularly call parents to discuss their child's progress;
- make a point to talk to parents in the mornings or evenings and specifically talk about their child's progress;
- create a parent bulletin board on which you post the week's activities and events.

Once you have demonstrated to parents that you are intent upon developing parent involvement activities which meet their needs and the needs of the program, you can more systematically review the information you have compiled and identify priorities. It is helpful at this point to develop goals—both short-term and long-term—of what you hope to accomplish. Examples of short-term goals follow:

- have each parent donate a covered dish for the international party;
- invite one parent per month to have lunch with the children in your family day care home;
- organize a center clean up day in which each parent will spend three hours working to beautify the classrooms.

Examples of long-term goals:

- set up workshops requested by parents on child development, health, and nutrition;
- organize an informal peer support group with the parents in your family day care home;
- ensure that every parent will participate in two weekend activities with his/her child.

Once a goal has been set, it is important to identify the necessary steps for achieving the goal. This might involve:

- asking parents to sign up for a particular dish they will bring;
- posting a list of tasks to be compiled on the clean up day and asking parents to volunteer;
- using the list of community resources to find "experts" to conduct workshops requested by parents;
- involving parents in organizing family outings at community locations.

The illustrative models in Chapter 5 identify step-by-step procedures for implementing different parent involvement activities.

EVALUATING AND MONITORING PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Evaluating and monitoring parent involvement can be a formal process in which parents are asked to respond to a questionnaire about an activity; or it can be an informal process in which you observe the outcomes of an activity and talk with parents about their reactions. Successful parent involvement is usually observable and easy to monitor. If your goal is to have parents sign up every three months for a meeting to discuss their child, and parents sign up and keep their appointments, then you know that you have been successful.

However, where monitoring and evaluation become most important is in those instances when an attempt at parent involvement is not successful. Evaluation helps you to know when something isn't working and why it isn't working. Therefore, evaluation questions should be asked throughout the implementation process to determine whether the next step should be taken. Going back to the parent meetings, if your goal is to have parents sign up every third month for a meeting, there are several steps that should be taken to accomplish this goal. The example below describes the process a provider could use in monitoring, and ultimately evaluating, the success of a stated goal.

Goal: To formalize the process for discussing children's progress by meeting with each child's parents once every three months.

Step 1— Call several parents to determine whether meetings every three months are appropriate.

If yes:

Send out announcements to all parents requesting they make appointments for the first meeting.

If no—ask the following questions:

Why do parents disapprove of the idea?

- Is tri-monthly too often?
- Is it too infrequent?
- Do parents think meetings are unnecessary?

If the idea is discarded, stop here and determine appropriate alternatives. If the idea meets approval, continue with Step 2.

Step 2—Hold the meetings with parents.

If parents keep their appointments, evaluate with the parents the usefulness of the formalized meetings. This can be accomplished by asking a few questions at the end of the meeting, such as:

- Did you find this meeting useful?
- Would you like to have another meeting in three months?

If parents don't keep their appointments, ask the following questions:

- Should reminders have been sent or phone calls made prior to appointments?
- Given my parent population, would I be better off making home visits?

SUMMARY

All truly successful parent involvement programs require the involvement of parents from start to finish. From identifying individual needs, interests, and skills to planning, implementing, and evaluating the activities, parents should be involved. Begin by having parents identify:

- what they want;
- what they need and how often;
- what they can give and when; and
- what limits their participation.

In this way, you can be assured that your parent involvement activities will be on target. In other words, you need parent involvement to start parent involvement.

CHAPTER 3. SETTING THE STAGE

Effective and positive communication between parents and providers is perhaps the single most important ingredient for successfully involving parents in day care settings. Without ongoing communication and mutual understanding between providers and parents, the day care arrangement can prove frustrating and unsatisfactory for parents, providers, and children alike. In fact, among all of the providers who pilot tested the models in this manual, an increased level of communication between providers, parents and children was cited most often as the single most positive outcome of the model demonstrations.

As the pilot test proved, inviting parents into the day care program can help to build a foundation for positive communication. The more familiar parents are with the program, the more they can communicate what they like about the program and can make suggestions about changes or improvements. In addition, by observing their child in the program, parents can better explain their child's unique needs to you, the provider.

Failure to communicate effectively can cause difficulties. For example, a child might tell you one thing when the parent has said another; a stressful situation at home—of which you're unaware—might affect the child's behavior; a parent might fail to mention a child's special health problem.

Good communication enables the child's two worlds—the home and the day care setting—to be fused. It also allows parents and providers to feel part of both worlds.

COMMUNICATING EXPECTATIONS

Expectations play a major part in setting a tone for ongoing parent-provider communication in day care. As a provider, you stand a better chance of shaping successful and trusting relationships with your parents if you can clearly communicate the exact nature of the day care service, explain your expectations regarding the parents' rights and responsibilities, and explore the parents' expectations for the program in an effort to uncover and resolve any discrepancies between the two.

For example, you may expect parents to arrive promptly at pick-up time, to provide lunch for the child, and to serve on a parent committee. Clear communication at the beginning of the day care relationship helps to avoid misunderstandings and possible bad feelings.

MANAGING FIRST ENCOUNTERS

The first encounter with parents sets the tone for communication and can influence the success of the day care arrangement. Whether yours is a day care center or family day care home, you should consider the following elements of effective communication when interacting with parents:

- Honest and nonjudgmental interactions which tell parents that they are viewed as important individuals whose opinions and knowledge of their own children you value.
- Active listening and an earnest attempt to discern the parents' thoughts, opinions, expectations, and concerns.
- Clear descriptions of all aspects of the child care situation and exploration of the parents' expectations regarding the day care arrangement (e.g., hours, fees, emergency procedures, late charges).
- Clarification of preconceived notions or assumptions about what the parents will bring to or want from the day care arrangement.
- Considerate and realistic rules or regulations which make the parent feel immediately comfortable with the day care arrangement.

CONTINUING COMMUNICATION IN DAY CARE

Just as setting the right tone is essential in day care programs, maintaining a positive and supportive atmosphere is equally important throughout all subsequent parent-provider interactions, both formal and informal. Parent meetings or parent/teacher conferences, for example, provide excellent opportunities for you to reinforce the underlying concept of a partnership in the day care arrangement. Letting parents know that you do not have all the answers, and that you can and want to learn from parents, is the key to success. A flexible approach to ongoing communication should build on parents' eagerness to be involved with their children's progress. At the same time, you must accommodate the parents' busy, often stressful, life. Your flexibility can help sustain the trust and mutual respect established earlier.

The day to day encounters you have with parents at drop-off and pick-up times afford the most consistent setting for ongoing and informal communications. These are the most important periods of the day for the children, who are either separating from or being reunited with their parents. In fact, most communication between parents and providers takes place at these times.

As a provider, you can offer simple advice to parents whose children are anxious about leaving their parents. You may advise the mother to say something like the following: "Mommy thinks about you even when she's at work," or "Mommy will be back to pick you up at five o'clock." A brief question each morning about the child's evening or weekend activities lets parents know that you are truly interested in the child. By telling parents about any special events or activities planned for the day, you can help parents feel more comfortable with the child's care. A one-minute conversation at the end of the day to let parents know of something special or important that the child did means a lot to both the parents and the child.

If either you or a parent feels a need for something more than a brief conversation, you should encourage the parent to arrive earlier than normal or to set up an appointment for a conference. Or, you could offer to make an evening phone call or a home visit. During such times, you can reinforce a trusting relationship with parents by accentuating the positive aspects of their child's development. When you do discuss developmental or behavioral concerns with parents (e.g., "Sally hit Sue today"), it should be done in a nonjudgmental and supportive manner. Try incorporating humorous anecdotes into such discussions. This often puts parents at ease and helps avoid a sense of parental frustration or embarrassment. At the beginning of the program, it is helpful to ask parents what times and places for discussing their child's progress would best suit their schedules. Offer flexible options and note the parents' response in a written reminder.

SOME SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION TIPS AND STRATEGIES

The following communication techniques have been and continue to be used successfully in a variety of day care programs—both center based and home based—which have achieved a high level of parent involvement. Some of these may work for you in your day care program.

LISTENING TIPS:

- Listen carefully to what parents have to say, whether you agree totally or not.
- Listen for the part of what a parent says that is new and important—which has not been brought to your attention before. Let parents know it's important, and that you appreciate their telling you.
- Ask parents for their observations regarding children's behavior at home if this is relevant to a discussion regarding classroom concerns.
- Listen to parental criticisms, and avoid becoming defensive.
- Put youself in the parents' shoes and try to see their point of view. Ask questions to clarify exactly what they are saying before responding with your point of view.
- Don't listen to rumors without investigating them directly.
- Write down points that require follow-up action or attention.

EXPRESSING TIPS:

- Set aside a time each day to talk to interested parents about their children or other issues of concern. Try to say something positive each day about their children's progress. Restate what parents have said from time to time to let them know that you are listening.
- Reinforce the successes the children and parents are having. Accentuate the positive.
- Talk to parents immediately following an incident (if possible) to clear the air and work things out. Don't let things go, hoping they will get better.
- Never leave parents with a sense of hopelessness or frustration. Always get back to parents with further information or with your response to their concerns.
- Always explain, in plain language, why you do certain things. If parents have problems with your explanations, or your procedures, take the time to discuss and mutually resolve the problem.
- Use a natural way of talking, free of jargon or complicated terminology.
- Freely admit when you have made an error or don't have an answer to a question.
- Provide a pad or bulletin board on which parents can jot down special instructions for the day (e.g., early leaving time, change in person picking up the child).

ACTION TIPS:

- If possible, allow parents to use your facilities on evenings and weekends (for a nominal fee, if necessary) for meetings, birthday parties, or potlucks.
- Collect child care fees in person and use the opportunity to solicit comments on the services parents are receiving.
- Collect family recipes from parents and adapt them for group snacks and meals. Use the parents' names for the names of the dishes.
- Visit parents' places of work, on field trips, so that children can see their parents "on the job," and parents can introduce their children to co-workers.
- Invite parents to arrange their lunch hours so they can be their children's guests for lunch at the center or home.
- Conduct regular provider/parent conferences.
- Have parents call their children at the program from time to time.
- Arrange visiting times for other interested members of the family (grandparents or siblings).
- Be consistent in having the same staff person be the "communicator" assigned to a given family or families.
- If you need to institute a new policy or change of procedures, if possible, a) invite some parents to help (participate) in the decisionmaking; b) let parents know well in advance of the actual change when and how and **why** it will be implemented; c) set up a mechanism for feedback, assuring parents that you want and need their ideas to assure that the change will work.
- Ask parents with talents or knowledge of general interest (e.g., consumer information, health subjects, auto repair) to come to the center for a program to share information with other parents. Build on resources immediately available through parents.

STRENGTHENING PARENT INVOLVEMENT THROUGH OBSERVATION

Clearly, the manner in which parents and providers communicate has a lot to do with the success of the parent involvement efforts—in both day care centers and family day care homes. Parental observation of the day care program can be one way to strengthen the basis for open communication between you and parents by bringing parents into the day care program.

Because parent observation is such a critical part of meaningful parent involvement in day care, parents should have a variety of opportunities to observe the day care setting.

There are a number of good reasons why you may want to encourage parents to observe the daily activities. Observation is not something new for parents—they've been observing their child's growth and development since birth. The opportunity to do this in a day care setting enables parents to see their child in relation to other children, to see how they relate to their peers and to other adults. It also serves as an introduction for establishing a good parent-provider relationship. Having the prospective parents visit the center or day care home and discuss their observations increases the likelihood of a good match between what parents are looking for and what the program offers. Pre-enrollment observation gives you an opportunity to "sell" your program.

OBSERVING BEFORE ENROLLMENT

Many day care providers require or strongly encourage a pre-selection observation by parents along with an interview prior to enrollment. If you choose to do this, it is important that you make parents feel welcome from the very beginning by explicitly inviting them to observe the program.

Parents who observe day care activities prior to enrollment should have a fairly good idea of what they are looking for, in order to determine whether or not to enroll their child in one particular program or another. The observation process may be easier for parents if they have decided what type of care best meets their needs and those of their children (e.g., center care, family day care, in-home care). That way, parents can concentrate on specific aspects of the program such as enrollment and group size, philosophy of care, interaction among staff, program of activities, type of equipment, and more.

By observing two or three programs before enrollment, the parents are better able to choose the one whose philosophy, style, program, and staff provide the best "match" for them and their children.

OBSERVING AFTER ENROLLMENT

Observing the program should not end once the child is enrolled. Often parents feel a need to occasionally observe their child in the day care setting in order to "stay in touch" with the program, to get first-hand information about the activities and staff, and to see directly how their child is interacting with and adjusting to his/her day care environment. The parent's knowledge of the child's daily activities provides a focus to discussions at home.

Many programs see parental observations as an opportunity for reluctant parents to become more comfortable with the program, a first step toward more regular involvement. Other providers use parental observations as a way of helping reinforce common goals.

Whatever the stated objective of a given parental observation, your program is sure to benefit from regular parental observations after enrollment.

STRUCTURING THE OBSERVATION PROCESS

Because parents are usually taking in so much information when they observe, it is useful if parents can organize the information and sort it out in a usable way. Some providers have developed parent observation forms or checklists which parents can use while observing the day care setting. These forms may vary based on the nature and purpose of the observation (pre-enrollment, post-enrollment, etc.), but they almost always contain questions or categories that focus the parents' attention on various aspects of the program. You can easily assist parents in structuring the observation process and analyzing the information gathered through the use of a simple checklist designed to help meet the parents' needs.

The questions which follow, included only as examples, might help you and your staff develop your own general parental observation checklist. Keep in mind, however, that any effective observation tool should be brief, focused, and reflective of the specific purpose and length of the parents' visit.

QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN A GENERAL "FEEL" FOR THE CENTER OR HOME

Overall Program Philosophy

- Do you think the staff/provider share your child rearing beliefs and practices?
- Do you like the way children are disciplined here?
- Do you think mealtime and/or toilet routines are reasonable and pleasant enough for the children?
- Do you think this home or center shows respect for your culture and for those of all the children?

Physical Facility

- Do you feel your child will be safe in this center/home (consider, for example, lead free paint, fire extinguishers, guarded stairs)?
- Do you think there is sufficient outdoor play space and equipment for the number of children?
- Do you like the variety of games, toys, and educational materials available?
- Do you think your child will get a feeling of order and stability from the way the classroom or home play area is arranged?
- Are there materials that reflect the culture and life style of all the children here?
- Is the space attractively arranged?
- Can the children easily get the materials they want or need without adult help?
- Are emergency phone numbers posted near a telephone?

Relationships With People

- How much does the provider/staff seem to enjoy being with the children?
- Does the provider/staff smile and play with the children a lot?
- Does the provider/staff have a sense of humor?
- Are the children allowed to show their feelings? To make suggestions? Are their suggestions taken seriously?
- Does the provider/staff seem calm and in charge at all times?
- How does the provider/staff work with individual children? Are differences respected?
- How well do the adults in the program get along with one another?

Program of Activities

- Do the children have a hand in planning the activities?
- Are the children creating things they are proud of? (Examples: cooking, woodworking, art projects, child-made displays, trips, science experiments, sewing).
- Do the children move about freely and in a relaxed manner?
- Do the children get a chance to do new and interesting things?
- How much time is allowed for indoor and outdoor play?
- How often do the children go on field trips to community places such as libraries, parks, swimming pools?

Support of Social, Emotional, Cognitive, and Physical Growth

- How are the children disciplined? Are all children disciplined in the same way?
- Are the children encouraged to take responsibility for their environment and space? Do they look out for each other?
- Are they getting well-balanced, nutritious meals?
- Are they getting outdoor, physical play, even in winter?
- Do the children seem interested in what they are doing throughout the day?

PARENTS INTERESTED IN FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

Most of the concerns cited above apply equally to family day care and center care. However, the following questions, specific to family day care, might also be considered:

- Are there a variety of interesting things to do?
- Do the children occasionally help the provider with routine household activities—cooking, folding laundry?
- What other people are in the home; how will they affect the children? How will they affect the provider's ability to give appropriate attention to your children (for example, invalids, other school-aged children, teenagers, other adults)?

In addition to the type of parental observation designed to offer parents a general "feel" for the whole program, parents can also be helped to make more focused observational visits after their children are enrolled. For example, parents might feel a need to observe the program to obtain concrete information regarding their children's progress in their social interactions, or their use of small muscles, or their physical coordination. As a provider, you could be helpful in such instances by offering parents the type of concise, focused observational mini-checklist which follows:

Purpose of Visit: Observe Johnny's Interactions With Others

What To Look For:

1. **Does Johnny appear to prefer being with other children, or by himself?**
2. **Is Johnny willing to participate in cooperative play, even for brief intervals?**
3. **How long does he stay involved in any one activity?**
4. **Does he complete tasks or just "flit" from one area to the next?**
5. **How do the other children respond to him?**

Regardless of what type of child care arrangement is ultimately chosen and how frequently it is observed, parents should follow some overall procedures during the actual observation process. These techniques will help reduce the distracting effects of the observation on the children in the home or center classroom. You might wish to give parents a list of observation tips before they schedule the observation:

Observation Tips For Parents

- Try to check with the director or family day care provider a day or two before your visit, to avoid conflicting with field trips or other special events.
- Let your child know when you plan to visit the program.
- Try to avoid disrupting the flow of activities by entering the room quietly and standing where you can see the whole room without having to move around a lot.
- Jot down any questions or comments you have during your observation and discuss them with the provider at an appropriate time, away from the children.

Making Use of the Information

Finally, it is important to offer ample opportunities for parents to discuss their impressions, questions, and comments, or to provide input or suggestions to you resulting from their observation of the program. Only through such interaction and communication will the observation process become an active one for you and parents alike. It is equally important for you to demonstrate a willingness to act on any valid suggestions that parents might offer, as well as to provide honest and instructive answers to parents' questions and to clarify any misinterpreted issues which might have occurred during the observation.

Because parental observation is such an important part of parent-provider communication, it is essential that you assist parents to become astute observers. They must be assured that what they see and learn from the observation session will be positively dealt with by you in a way that will benefit everyone.

SUMMARY

You and your parents share responsibility for the day care program. Underlying this responsibility is the need to regularly discuss with one another your knowledge and observations about the children. To encourage continuing communications, you should establish a relationship with parents that allows them to feel comfortable expressing their feelings and perceptions. Observing their children in the day care setting allows parents to better understand you as well as the children. This understanding improves your ability and that of parents to be sensitive to the other's needs.

CHAPTER 4. AVENUES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As has been emphasized throughout this resource manual, parent involvement is a partnership between day care providers and parents that creates an environment which supports the positive development of the child.

However, in order to work, this partnership must be a two-way street. As a provider, you must find effective ways to involve and support parents through the day care process and parents must help to nurture and sustain you through their active involvement in the program.

Day care, by its very nature, is a support for families. The provision of quality care for young children whose parents must work is the most important service programs can offer to families. If you are a family day care provider, you are especially likely to develop a close relationship with the four or five families you serve. Often the services you provide by inviting parents to stay for dinner, caring for children overnight or for weekends, and the daily, personal talks provide support above and beyond the intended program. In fact, many day care providers see their program as an extended family for the children they serve.

In the same way that you offer support to parents, so parents can support you and the day care program. The more extensively parents are involved, the greater their support. This fundamental concept represents the guiding principle of parent involvement approaches, which see parents as a support to providers.

This chapter is divided into two sections: 1) Providers Supporting Parents and 2) Parents Supporting Providers. It offers general information about the various support activities/programs that day care providers can undertake. Detailed information in the form of illustrative models will be discussed in Chapter 5.

PROVIDERS SUPPORTING PARENTS

Every family needs support. In the past, this support came from relatives and neighbors—the extended family. Mothers generally stayed home to raise the children, often with the support of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and close family friends. Today, families are smaller and more isolated from traditional sources of support. They are often geographically separated from relatives in towns and cities that are strange to them. The number of families where both parents work has increased dramatically, and the care of their young children has become a matter of increasing concern in a society which necessitates mothers working in order to support their families. With such vast changes taking place, families are searching for new ways to connect with others and develop their own networks of support. Parent involvement approaches that are built around the concept of parent education frequently share the following goals:

- to increase parent awareness of the significance and impact of their role in their child's development;
- to increase parental knowledge of child development;
- to provide parents with support in coping with stress relating to child rearing;
- to assist parents in enhancing their child's cognitive, sensory, and emotional development;
- to increase parenting skills;
- to increase parental knowledge of nutrition and how to maintain their child's physical health.

Parent support activities may be primarily the responsibility of the parents or may come from the day care program. The benefits of family support can be tremendous, but the commitment of time, money, and personal involvement should not be underestimated. It might be helpful for you to consider three questions:

1. To what level of involvement are you and your staff really committed in implementing and continuing support activities?
2. What vehicle is most appropriate for the individuals or family situation you are dealing with?
3. Can you produce the necessary resources of money, facilities, and skilled staff needed to run such a program?

PARENT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Family support in day care can take a variety of forms. Many day care programs support parents and families routinely by providing home visits, parent activities, parent support groups, or similar services designed to meet their diverse needs. Usually, these types of informal activities require a minimum amount of planning or coordination and can be easily implemented by center staff or the home care provider.

INFORMAL PARENT SUPPORT

Newsletters, Updates

Newsletters or one-page updates can serve the purpose of continuing communication between providers and parents by keeping parents informed of what's going on in the center/home. In addition to their use as a communication tool, newsletters/updates can convey practical tips for parents including: 1) ideas for making toys and instructional materials at home, 2) toy safety information, 3) discussion of health-related issues such as lead poisoning, auto safety, immunizations and childhood diseases, and the importance of a proper diet. They are also excellent vehicles for sharing general child development information, such as stages of child growth and development and how children learn. In addition, you can also obtain, from private and public organizations, free pamphlets and brochures on topics such as child safety, child development, and child abuse. Family day care providers in particular make frequent use of such free resources to share with parents.

Open House

An open house can be designed for parents of children who attend the program or for the community at large. An open house planned for parents is usually a good opportunity to share information with parents on your philosophy of education and the value of various learning materials and activities used in the classroom or family day care home. One fun way to do this is to let the parents actively explore the materials themselves by having them go through a shortened version of their child's day care. By actually taking part in their children's activities, parents will better understand the center's learning goals and approaches. You can easily arrange materials on the tables with short descriptions and information on the skills children gain from using the materials.

Another way you can share information is to have a slide show for parents of their children at play in the center or family day care home. A discussion of skills the children are developing while at play can be integrated into the slide show through your narration. The more the parents understand the value of activities done in the center or family day care home and the importance of children's play, the greater the possibility that they will use that knowledge when interacting with their children.

An open house planned for the community often has a slightly different focus. It is a good way to publicize the program, develop good public relations, and gain support from community groups. Parents can share a major part of the planning and organization of the open house. They can be asked to invite individuals from the community who might be interested in learning about the program, enrolling their children, or helping to raise funds. Parents who are well informed about the program can explain the goals and philosophy as well as the activities. Many of the same ideas described above can be adapted to the community open house.

Home-School Learning Notes

Home-School Learning Notes are one-page sheets that tell parents what their child is learning and pinpoint how the parent can reinforce or expand that skill in the home. These notes are usually sent home on a regular basis, and are almost always simply written along the lines of the following example:

> *Jamal has been working on basic classification or sorting skills. Could you maybe let him help you sort your laundry or different grocery items?* (e.g., putting all white clothes in one pile, dark clothes in another.)

If a parent, staff member, or even a child has artistic ability, you might want to put illustrations on these take-home sheets to make them more attractive and appealing and therefore more likely to be used.

The Home Start Training Center in Millville, Utah, suggests the following guidelines for developing home-school notes:

> Be practical. Suggest the kind and number of activities that will be easy to incorporate into the family's normal, daily routines. Build them

around materials that are already in the home.

Involve other children that may be in the home by suggesting some activities that they can all enjoy doing together.

Keep a copy of each home-school sheet so that you will have a record of suggestions already made to the family.

Request suggestions from the family about improving the activities or feedback on how the activity went. You may want to attach a reply form so parents can send written comments back to you.

Inform parents of their contributions to the child's progress. Show appreciation for their efforts.

Ask parents for their own activity ideas and with their permission include them in your "notes" so that they may be shared with other families.

Parent-Provider Conferences

Many providers conduct parent-provider conferences on a regular basis. Generally, the child's development over the past six months, as well as expectations for their future development, are discussed. These conferences allow teachers and parents to communicate with each other and share concerns and highlights of the child's development. Some providers suggest learning activities for the parent to do at home with the child, and the parent, in turn, can suggest activities and ideas to enhance the program. These are good opportunities for you to get valuable feedback from parents about their satisfaction with the program. Such feedback is useful for evaluation purposes.

Family Day Care providers often take a more informal approach to these parent-provider discussions. Some share much of this information over the telephone with their parents, while others invite one parent per month to stay for dinner one evening and discuss their child's progress in the relaxed home atmosphere. Either way, the goal of sharing information and ideas concerning the children's progress with parents is the same in family day care homes as it is in day care centers.

Peer Support

Some providers have established a mechanism for peer support among parents in their programs, based on the "big brother" or "big sister" principle. When a parent is troubled about some aspect of care for his or her child or has feelings that need to be worked through, he or she is teamed with a parent who has experienced similar difficulties. Participating family members can welcome new families and help them adjust to the program and their new community. The center thus provides parents with the opportunity to use an informal peer network for support.

Even in family day care settings where the number of parents served by any one provider is generally small, it is common for parents to form informal peer support networks for such tasks as dropping off or picking up children, welcoming a new family, or helping one another in times of unusual stress.

Other Parent Support Activities

There are many other ways that providers offer support to parents in day care programs. Among the most common are the following: a welcoming social event, such as a pot luck dinner, coffee hour, or dance, to make new parents feel at home in the day care program; a "Whole Day Care Story" (history, philosophy, goals, and so on) from a parent, rather than a staff, perspective; a parent handbook; a parent bulletin board or lounge; and many more.

PARENTS SUPPORTING PROVIDERS

Just as parents want and need to be supported by you, the provider, so, too, you need the assistance of the parents in your day care program. Operating a child care program is often a lonely and demanding job for both center-based and home-based providers.

Each of you knows the difficulties of continually shouldering the responsibilities and the countless details of running a program: arranging for substitutes when staff members are ill; working on tight budgets; finding a new location; negotiating with the funding agency that wants to cut funds to the program; deciding how to handle parents who habitually arrive late to pick up their chilren. Providers who attempt to shoulder all these responsibilities themselves soon lose their enthusiasm and effectiveness on the job. It is for just this reason that more and more providers are looking towards parents as a resource for their programs.

Those of you who have not shared the responsibility and control with parents in the past will need to think about the levels of involvement for which you are ready. Achieving the type of parent involvement which will give you support takes time and a willingness to work with parents to help them gain the understandings and skills required. The payoff will be a savings of time and energy, once the parent has learned the ropes. Parents can provide support to day care programs in several ways: as direct resources to the program; as decisionmakers; and as advocates for the program.

Parents as Resources

The most basic way in which parents can provide support to you and the program is to serve as a resource, helping with specific tasks that need to be completed. Preceding this willingness to share their knowledge and to assume responsibility for tasks is the establishment of mutual respect and trust between you and the parents. When both recognize and respect the valuable contributions each can make to the program, the groundwork is laid for mutual support. Whereas some programs require parents to volunteer support as a prerequisite for enrollment, others are less formal, making it clear that parents are encouraged to help throughout the year. This less formal approach requires that you maintain close contact with parents and use a personal approach for securing volunteers.

Here are some practical tips and strategies for ways in which you and your parents can share your collective knowledge and skills to benefit the program:

- Set aside time at parent meetings for sharing information and ideas. Consider dividing into small groups to ensure participation by everyone. Ask parents to respond to specific topics: their goals for their children in the program, what they think the program is doing well, and where they feel improvement can be made.

- In large programs, have each classroom hold parent-staff meetings to share ideas and elect representatives to a Parent Input Committee. Follow-up on parent suggestions is crucial to success.

- Post a provider needs assessment inventory with sign-up sheets for areas where parent help is needed.

- Hold a "Curriculum Night" at which you share with the parents what your goals are for the children and how the program supports these goals. Ask for their ideas.

- Invite parents to come and share their interests, traditions or their work with the children and take small groups of children to visit parents at work.

- Build into the curriculum the different cultures represented in the families served by the program. Invite parents to come and prepare a traditional meal or share their customs with the children and staff.

- Ask parents to share their ideas about places of interest in the community and things that interest the children, so you can enrich the curriculum.

- Plan a materials workshop one weekday evening or Saturday so that parents can help make new resources for the classroom.

While many of these ideas can be adapted to family home settings, there are some specific ways in which parents can support family home providers:

- Parents can form a cooperative agreement to cover the child care responsibilities when a family home mother is ill or on vacation.

- Parents can offer to pack lunches for their children several days a week, in order to relieve the family home mother's cooking responsibilities.

- Parents can contribute to a family home food shelf rather than face increased costs for child care.

- Parents can plan and organize holiday parties and even host them at their own homes.

- Parents can offer to bring lunch for all the children on their child's birthday.

- Parents can donate or repair toys.

When parents have a better understanding of the program and see that it is relevant to the needs and life experiences of their children, they are more willing to contribute time and energy to make the program successful. Parents can save you a lot of time and money by helping with specific tasks. When a large number of people accept responsibility to complete a variety of small tasks, it means a minimal time commitment for each person. The secret is to tap each person's interests and skills, to give a variety of choices and to identify tasks which can be assigned to others.

Parents As Decision Makers

There are a variety of structures for involving parents as decision makers in day care. Parents often serve on boards of directors, policy councils, advisory committees, and other such bodies. Parents who serve on boards of directors are likely to have policy-making responsibilities, while those who serve on advisory bodies have the opportunity to provide recommendations on policy matters without having the final decision making responsibility.

While parents often make up the majority on day care boards or policy councils, such bodies often include other interested members of the community and/or experts in relevant fields. Members can be selected in a variety of ways. Sometimes the entire parent body can elect representatives to serve on the board. In large programs, each classroom or each center may elect one or two parents to represent it on the board. Often, interested parents may volunteer to serve, give a speech to parents on why they feel qualified, and run for election.

Advantages of Parent Boards

Day care programs that involve parents in the decision making process usually see it as a way to share the burden of making decisions, and setting and implementing policy. An active and effective parent board or policy council knows what is going on in the program and can support it in times of real need. Unlike parents who are not members, parent board members who visit the program every day to deliver and pick up their children have ample opportunities to observe the program. As a result, they have first-hand knowledge about the curriculum, the environment, the staff, any program strengths and weaknesses—all important prerequisites for effective board participation. Here are some ways that parents can help providers through boards or special "action" committees:

- If the center has to relocate, the board can find available space and share in making the decision on what space to use.
- If additional funds are needed, the board can organize the fundraising events.
- When additional staff is needed, a parent committee of the board can help screen and select the people who will care for their children. Parents have no trouble identifying the characteristics they value in caregivers and, with some assistance, they can be very intuitive interviewers.
- If the program has been unable to establish a good relationship with the group that rents the center space, the board can mediate negotiations and often work out the problems.
- The board can help set policy about late pick-ups of children, religious holidays, or other "controversial issues."

In addition to these advantages, parent boards or advisory groups can also provide fresh insights on difficult administrative decisions, arbitrate staff-staff and staff-parent conflicts, keep the community informed about the program, and help to recruit volunteers. Many parent boards contain members who can give valuable legal or financial advice and almost all can provide much needed moral support to the program staff in times of crises.

Shortcomings of Boards

One of the real shortcomings of parent boards is the fact that providers may have to spend a lot of time and energy to help parents become real experts in the program operation and to acquire the necessary skills in decision making. Some day care providers note that board members frequently become sidetracked on routine matters, such as on parents' overdue fees, or the wording of a fundraising letter. This can lead to boards spending more time on administrative matters than on policy matters.

Another common problem associated with parent boards is that they often lack individuals knowledgeable in crucial areas such as child development, day care practices, public funding, and State and national policies. As a result, providers can spend a lot of their time developing policies and proposals and explaining them to the board. Some directors confronted with this problem have urged their boards to form task forces or committees to study all they can about important issues—such as State day care policies—and share this information with other board members and interested parents. In this way, board members build up expertise in critical areas and can share with the director the responsibility of generating policy recommendations in these important areas. However, to be effective, board members must be willing to spend a lot of time in meetings or in gathering information. Lack of time can be a real problem and even a deterrent for busy parents who, though interested in the program, have little time to devote to board responsibilities.

How to Organize Effective Boards

Most decision making boards assign committees to handle specific responsibilities. Some are standing committees, such as personnel or fund raising, which are needed from one year to the next. Others are one-time committees formed to accomplish a specific task such as obtaining a bank loan for a new facility.

Generally, day care programs work most efficiently with small boards—ten members or fewer. Larger boards often become unmanageable when it comes to discussions and decision making. Also many programs have discovered that the larger the board, the less likely are the individual members to participate actively since they may feel that their participation won't be missed.

Another effective organizational strategy is to have board members serve rotating, multi-year terms. An example of this is a board whose members are elected for three-year terms with one third of them being elected every year. Such a strategy can avoid the pitfall of having board members replaced just when they are becoming knowledgeable about the program and comfortable with one another.

Finally, it is a good idea for programs with parent boards to develop a clear written statement of the roles and responsibilities of board members. Such a tactic can avoid confusion and possible bad feelings by specifying in advance the kind of issues that the board will consider and those which will be handled by the program director. Some programs develop action-oriented functions with corresponding tasks that the board should accomplish during the year. Specifying the roles and responsibilities of board members in a clear and task-oriented way makes clear to everyone what the board is supposed to be held accountable for.

PARENTS AS ADVOCATES

One of the greatest contributions parents can make to day care is to ensure its long-term survival by helping to educate society about the nature and importance of quality child care services. As long as society continues to undervalue and underfund child care, there will be a need for advocacy. As consumers, parents are the most effective advocates for day care. Programs which receive Federal or State support are especially vulnerable to funding cuts and cannot avoid becoming involved in politics. Yet, all child care programs, regardless of how they obtain funds, want to be able to expand their programs and feel some confidence about the stability of the future.

A primary goal for parent advocacy is to increase public awareness of, and commitment to, child care as a national priority. This can only be accomplished by maintaining continuous public information campaigns. By educating legislators, private and public agencies, and the general public about the critical early years and the important role quality day care plays in shaping the child's future development, you can help meet many of the long-range goals for quality day care. Your program can conduct its own public relations and educational campaigns by:

- developing brochures and slide shows to describe the program and sharing these with the public;
- publicizing your program in the newspaper—especially special events, such as fund raisers;
- cultivating relationships with key individuals, for example, inviting spouses of legislators to serve on the boards or on advisory committees.

In the foreseeable future, there will continue to be uneven funding for child care and, therefore, a need to deal with crisis situations. As a provider, you can be more effective if you join with parents and develop strong alliances with others in your community.

Networking—sharing information and resources to attain a common goal—is an excellent way for you and your parents to work together to maintain, improve, and expand day care services. Networks can be formal organizations made up of providers and parents such as:

- day care councils—city-wide, county-wide, or larger,
- parents' associations,
- directors' associations,
- Title XX planning groups,
- a local affiliate group of a national organization,
- family day care provider associations.

Or, they can be informal groups of providers and parents working together to improve health care services or playground facilities. Regardless of the structure, by networking with parents you can only serve to strengthen advocacy efforts, expanding your effectiveness and influence.

SUMMARY

It was not the intent of this chapter to advocate one overall category of parent involvement over the other. Some day care programs will want and need to pursue activities—formal or informal—which fall naturally within the scope of programs supporting parents. Others may find that those approaches which exemplify ways that parents can support the day care program are more in tune with your needs.

By highlighting the unique qualities of each of these categories of parent involvement in day care, this chapter was intended to provide you with a useful context within which to analyze and assess the specific illustrative parent involvement models and approaches which follow in the next chapter. The models or approaches outlined in Chapter 5, along with the related specific examples of each, reflect both categories of parent involvement—either programs supporting parents or parents support programs.

CHAPTER 5. ILLUSTRATIVE MODELS

It is often helpful to learn about other approaches and programs when planning for parent involvement. Learning about what others have done can spark interest in taking a new approach or augmenting something already initiated in the day care program.

This chapter includes descriptions of a range of parent involvement models and approaches, illustrating support from providers to parents and from parents to providers. There are a total of 14 parent involvement approaches or models described on the following pages. These models, arranged according to programmatic similarities, represent the following broad categories:

- Home Center Communication
- Facilities and Resources to Support Parents
- Self-Help Efforts
- Structured Parenting Models
- Parents Supporting Providers

Each model description includes a definition of the model, a description of its functional goals, a list of the implementation steps, model benefits, common problems and solutions, and the model requirements or resources needed to successfully implement the model.

Twelve of the 14 models described in this chapter were fully pilot tested by providers around the country as a part of this project's field demonstration. The descriptions of these 12 models go beyond the basic model theory to include a discussion of exactly how these models were implemented by providers and parents in real day care programs.

For the 12 fully pilot tested models, the following specific pilot test information is included: the number and types of providers who pilot tested the model, the types of parents involved in the model demonstrations, the model implementation strategies used during the field test, a list of the models' advantages and disadvantages as cited by those providers who conducted the demonstrations, recommendations and additional model resources.

An overview of all of the models described in this chapter precedes the individual model descriptions.

OVERVIEW OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT MODELS

type/name of model	description	page
HOME CENTER COMMUNICATION		
Home Visits	In-home contact between providers and parents.	49
Parental Observation	Informal sessions at the day care program during which parents observe their children in the day care setting and discuss what they see with the provider. Parental observation can take place before and after enrollment.	53
FACILITIES AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PARENTS		
Telephone Warm Lines	An open telephone line set up to provide emotional support and other types of assistance to parents during times of crisis.	58
Toy Lending Libraries	Facilities which lend play equipment, instructional games and toys to children, their parents or other persons who provide care to children.	62
Activities Workshops	Group sessions in which parents and other caregivers make and explore learning materials and activities to use with children.	67
Drop-In Centers	Facilities which offer intermittent child care services to parents on an "as needed" basis. Some centers may also offer parents emotional support and parenting information.	74
Resource Networks and Guides	A listing of services and organizations which provide support to families in the areas of job and career counseling, legal aid, health, recreation, and others.	79

type/name of model	description	page

SELF-HELP EFFORTS

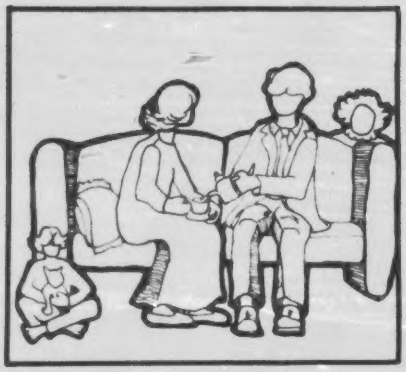
type/name of model	description	page
Parent Support Group	Self-help groups in which members share common child-rearing concerns, provide mutual support and learn new child rearing techniques.	83
Cooperatives	Group projects in which people work together and share the responsibility for meeting common needs for such things as babysitting, buying food or transporting children.	87

STRUCTURED PARENTING PROGRAMS

type/name of model	description	page
Footsteps	A Federally funded parent education model consisting of a series of 30 half-hour television shows broadcast on many PBS stations across the country.	92
Exploring Parenting	An innovative parenting curriculum developed by Project Head Start to help parents strengthen and improve their parenting skills.	97

PARENTS SUPPORTING PROVIDERS

type/name of model	description	page
Parent Committees	Committees formed for the specific purpose of performing tasks which benefit the day care center or family day care home.	101
Parent Boards	A group of people who assist the provider in an advisory or decision making capacity in the administration and operation of the day care program.	105
Parent/Provider Advocacy Groups	Organizations of child care providers, parents and other interested individuals formed to improve the quality of child care programs.	110



HOME VISITS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition:

In-home contact between parents and providers which is usually provider initiated. Home visits allow providers and parents the opportunity to talk in a relaxed environment.

Goals:

To increase the amount of positive parent-provider-child communication through direct interaction with parents in the child's home.
To build parents' understanding of ways they can reinforce their child's learning in their own homes.

Steps:

1. Define the specific purpose of the visit.
2. Contact parents; discuss the purpose of the visit and decide on a mutually acceptable date and time for the visit.
3. Collect any materials to be shared with the family during the visit.
4. Once inside the home, create a friendly atmosphere by being relaxed and showing an interest in what is being said.
5. Make the visit informative and helpful by expressing yourself clearly and encouraging parents to ask questions.
6. As soon as possible after the interview, record any needed information such as intended follow-up steps.
7. Follow up the visit by other personal contacts, additional visits, or referrals to social services staff if needed.

Benefits:

- Allows parents and providers to get better acquainted.
- Familiarizes provider with parents and home environment.
- Encourages information sharing.

- Provides interaction between parents and provider in parents' environment.
- Builds a link between home and day care environment.
- Improves parenting skills.

Problems:

- The parents seem very nervous and anxious as the home visit begins.
- The children in the family keep interrupting the visit.
- Parents may not want the provider in the home.

Solutions:

- Start off discussing areas of general interest—the weather, TV, etc.—or light conversation about the child. Be relaxed; this will help the parents be more relaxed.
- Bring books or simple games for the children to play with. Ask permission of the parents before sharing them with the children.
- Make sure the parent understands the purpose of the visit. (She or he may think you are just being nosy.) If the parent is adamant about not wanting the provider in the home, arrange to have the visit at the center or possibly at your home.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- Access to the necessary means of transportation
- Willingness to make the visit at a convenient time for parents (e.g. possibly evening or weekend visits for working parents).

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	3
Day Care Homes	2
Rural Programs	3
Urban Programs	2

Type of Parents: Primarily working parents in the $8,000 to $15,000 income range. Approximately equal numbers of single parents and working parents participated.

Methods of Implementation:

- Providers sent letters to parents explaining project.
- Providers introduced model to parents at meeting.
- Providers arranged convenient time for visits with parents.
- Some providers used manual and model specific technical assistance steps.
- Providers made home visits and prepared narrative accounts.
- Providers discussed visits with parents following visits and obtained their reactions.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Increases parent/staff communication.
- Provides better understanding of home and/or center environment.
- Parents are more friendly following visits.
- Parents are more interested in the program activities and in their children's progress.
- Children are excited about visits.
- Children are better adjusted to school following home visits.
- Staff understand parents better.
- Staff are more willing to plan other activities with parents.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Difficult to arrange convenient time for all.
- Travel distance is problem in rural areas.
- Difficult for family day care providers to do.

Recommendations: This model works best where there is some staff flexibility and time to make visits. Problems with transportation in rural areas need to be worked out in advance. The model lends itself better to day care centers than to family day care homes.

RESOURCES

THE GEORGIA OUTREACH PROJECT OF THE DAY CARE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF AMERICA

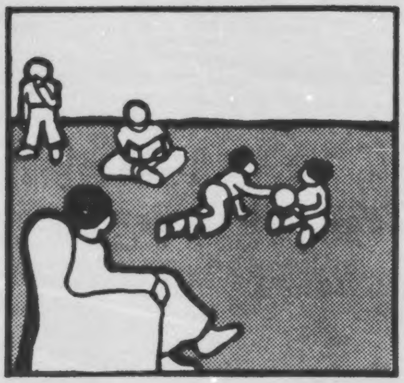
This three-year demonstration project focused on the provision of services to low-income rural families through the use of home visitors and outreach activities. The project was designed to help parents strengthen their own families.

Home visitors in the program addressed learning needs of children in the family, home management skills of parents, and family counseling and referral needs. Social activities for parents were also developed.

By using an outreach delivery system, the project encouraged the development of close, informal rapport between parents and providers and the tailoring of services to suit individual family needs.

The project has a very useful publication called "Home-Based Family Services: A Report of the Georgia Outreach Project." It outlines useful goals for children, parents, and the community. It is presently available on a limited basis through:

The Day Care and Child Development Council of America, Inc.
1602 17th St. NW
Washington, DC, 20009.



PARENTAL OBSERVATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: Opportunites for parents to observe the day care program in operation and to see, first hand, their children interact in the day care setting. Observation sessions can take place before as well as after enrollment, and generally include opportunities for parents to discuss their observations with the provider.

Goal: To provide parents with opportunities to increase their awareness and understanding of their child's day care program through direct observation.

Steps:

1. Determine the best parental observation policy for the program and communicate this policy to prospective parents before enrollment. Make sure that the policy makes parents feel **welcome** to observe the program and their children.
2. Set aside mutually convenient times for observations to take place and develop procedures for parental observations that are appropriate for parents and are least disruptive for the program and children.
3. In pre-enrollment observations, meet with the parents before the observation to help pinpoint exactly what they are looking for in a child care arrangement. Help the parents determine what form of care arrangement may best meet their needs.
4. After enrollment, invite parents to observe their children periodically as a way to stay in touch with the program and reinforce common goals for the children.
5. Develop a parental observation checklist or guide to help parents structure the observation process and analyze the information gathered.
6. Plan to meet with the parents after the observation session to discuss

any questions and/or concerns and agree on appropriate next steps. Make appropriate referrals, as necessary.

Benefits:

- Parents are better able to make informed choices about day care for their children and select programs that best meet their needs.
- Parental observations lay the groundwork for open and honest communication between provider, parent and child.
- Parents can use observation as a first step toward becoming more involved in the day care program on a regular basis.
- Parents become more aware of the day care program's content and are better able to reinforce at home what goes on in the program.

Problems:

- Parents may be reluctant to approach the provider about observing.
- The regular daily routine may be disrupted and the children distracted by parental observers.
- Parents may not know what to look for during the observation.
- Parents may not know what to do with all the information they gather through an observation session.
- It's hard to sustain the interest of busy parents in the day care program after their child is enrolled.

Solutions:

- Make the parents feel welcome by inviting them to observe the program and making it easy for them to do so.
- Set aside a regular time for observation to take place, if possible. Develop simple observation procedures that will minimize the amount of disruption to the regular routine.
- Structure the observation by providing a checklist or observation guide for parents to use which highlights specific things to look for.
- Hold a "Post Observation" conference with parents to discuss what they saw, answer any questions and determine appropriate next steps.
- Encourage parents to observe their child in the program on a regular basis—perhaps quarterly. Use the post observation conference as an opportunity to keep the parents informed about the program and/or enlist their involvement.

Requirements/ Resources Needed

- A friendly and inviting atmosphere which encourages parents to observe the program before and after enrollment.
- A daily program schedule which specifies convenient times for parental observations to take place.
- An observation guide or checklist which helps parents know what to look for and how to process the information they gather.
- A knowledgeable program staff member who can be available to discuss with the parents any questions or concerns which may result from the observation.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	3
Day Care Homes	4
Rural Programs	6
Urban Progams	1

Type of Parents:

Almost all of the parents involved in this model's demonstrations were employed full time. Parents annual incomes ranged from $8,000 to more than $24,000. The majority of these parents were married; a few were divorced or single parents.

Methods of Implementation:

- Providers relied on manual and model-specific TA steps.
- Providers discussed model's benefits with parents.
- Providers developed questionnaires for parents to use during observation.
- Providers encouraged parents to observe program at their convenience.
- Parents completed questionnaires while observing.
- Parents spent l/2 hour each afternoon in day care home observing.
- Providers discussed parents reactions after their visit.

- Providers sent parents a questionnaire to complete after visiting the program.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Increases parent/staff communication.
- Gives useful parental feedback on program to providers.
- Provides flexibility in implementation.
- Increases parental awareness of the program.
- Increases willingness of parents to volunteer time after observations.
- Improves children's self-image.
- Develops more positive staff attitudes about involving parents in the program.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Difficult for working parents to schedule observation time.
- Staff nervous about parents observing.
- Hard to get parents motivated to observe.
- Hard to get parents together for post-observation discussions.

Recommendations: This is an ideal model for day care programs interested in drawing new parents into the program and sparking their interest in other types of involvement. The costs and staff time required are minimal. The reward in increased staff-parent communication is well worth the effort.

RESOURCES

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DAY CARE

This easy to use booklet, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, was developed for parents and other day care consumers, and provides a complete picture of day care. The purpose of the Guide is to give parents concrete information about all varieties of day care which will enable them to become better consumers of this vital service.

The Guide discusses what makes up a quality day care program and lists some important factors for parents to consider as they begin their search for day care for their children. The Guide also gives detailed information about the different forms of day care and contains an observation checklist that parents can use as they select the program that best meets the needs of their child. In addition, the Guide contains information about helpful child care-related resources throughout the country. **A Parent's Guide to Day Care** is available from the following source:

Gryphon House, Inc.
Early Childhood Books
3706 Otis Street
P.O. Box 217
Mt. Rainier, MD 20712
$2.95

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT: AN APPROACH TO EVALUATING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF A DAY CARE CENTER

by Ilse Mattick and Frances J. Perkins

While not developed specifically for parents, this comprehensive assessment tool could provide parents with useful information concerning what to look for in a day care setting. The purpose of the Guide is to assist those who wish to evaluate the learning environment of a day care center through observation. It offers a broad range of issues to think about and questions to consider which focus on:

- I. Physical Setting
    - A. Structure
    - B. Materials
    - C. Temporal Structure
- II. Interactional Setting (Relationships)
    - A. Teacher-child
    - B. Child-child
    - C. Staff
    - D. Teacher-parent
- III. Program
    - A. Curriculum Content
    - B. Teaching Strategies
    - C. Social-Emotional Climate

This book, originally published by the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, can be obtained from Gryphon House publishers for $4.95, address above.

TELEPHONE WARM LINES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: Open telephone lines set up to respond to parents' questions and concerns or as a means of support during times of need.

Goal: To provide parents expanded access to a relevant support system for information, advice, and assistance in times of need.

Steps:

1. Assess the need for such a service.
2. Identify people who are willing and able to plan and implement the service and decide what kind of assistance will be provided (e.g., crisis, general child rearing questions).
3. Locate a site and secure funding for the service if needed.
4. Develop a process for answering questions and providing a follow-up.
5. Plan a strategy to publicize the service and carry it out.
6. Implement the service.

Benefits:

- A Warm Line offers parents immediate help with a crisis or problem, as well as emotional support.
- It provides information parents may need in a crisis.
- It offers confidentiality which is especially important to timid users.

Problems:

- It may be hard to secure a large and highly skilled staff to handle crisis calls on a 24-hour basis.

- A small day care program is not equipped to set up a Telephone Warm Line.
- It's difficult to find skilled people to handle phones on a continuing basis.
- You cannot always ensure that someone will be there all the time.

Solutions:

- Join with other groups to share the responsibilities. Limit the hours and be prepared to make referrals to other organizations that can handle the crises.
- Limit the Warm Line to parents whose children attend the day care program and set aside a few hours one day a week for the director to handle calls.
- Recruit knowledgeable people from mental health programs, universities, or clinics as volunteers for a few hours a week.
- Establish a system whereby messages are taken and calls returned within a short period of time.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- Knowledgeable and sensitive individuals to respond to calls. A volunteer network of parents, students or staff.
- A phone system with the capacity to serve the warm line.
- A method to publicize the service, as well as the necessary materials.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	2
Urban Programs	2

Type of Parents: The parents involved in these model demonstrations were almost all working parents with incomes between $8,000 and $24,000. The majority were single or divorced parents.

Methods of Implementation:

- Providers involved the center's board of directors in the planning.
- Providers introduced idea to parents but used "Warm" Line rather than Hot Line.
- Providers relied on Provider Manual for steps and activities to use with model.
- Providers developed flyers announcing Warm Line Service to send home with children.
- Providers held meetings to orient the parents to the Warm Line.
- Providers used local college student volunteers to help "man" the Warm Line.
- Providers opened lines during center hours.
- Providers answered work-related problems and made appropriate referrals when necessary.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Inexpensive to implement.
- Attractive to working parents.
- Confidentiality aspect is good.
- Increase in staff's awareness of parents' concerns.
- Encouragement of more staff input into the program.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Hard to make staff available to talk to parents when they call.
- Difficult to recruit competent student volunteers to "man" the phones.
- Difficult to get parents to use the system initially.
- May duplicate already existing telephone services in the community.

Recommendations: This model is an excellent way to reach out to young parents. It can provide a real service to parents while also serving as a communication vehicle for providers, parents, and the larger community.

RESOURCES

PRESCHOOL AND INFANT PARENTING SERVICE (PIPS)

The Preschool and Infant Parenting Service (PIPS) is a comprehensive program developed to assist parents of young children (birth through five years) who have concerns about their children's development and behavior. A central feature of the program is the "Warm Line," a free telephone service which offers parenting assistance and advice to parents who have nowhere else to go for help. Staffed by 26 mental health professional volunteers, the Warm Line offers parents expert advice and guidance on child development from clinical social workers, child development specialists, and other child care professionals. Parents call in, leave a message, and are called back within 24 hours. Telephone contacts may be maintained over several months. The process through which families receive support through the Warm Line is described below.

Phase I—Information Gathering. During this phase, the professional obtains information from the parent which may be critical to understanding the nature of the problem. Background data regarding the duration of the problem, measures used by parents, other sources of assistance sought, etc., are also obtained.

Phase II—Assessment. In this phase, staff members assess parental responses to advice and determine what is needed from a clinical point of view. This phase includes determining the apparent openness to learning and psychological change on the part of the parent.

Phase III—Follow Up. In Phase III, a follow-up phone call is made. If the situation has not improved, the parent may be referred to a group at "Parents House" or directly to clinical services.

For more information, contact:

Helen Reid
Clinical Coordinator
Preschool and Infant Parenting Service
8857 Saturn Street
Los Angeles, CA 90335

TOY LENDING LIBRARIES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition:

Facilities set up for the purpose of lending play equipment, instructional games, and toys to children, their parents, or other persons who provide care to children (such as day care providers or foster parents).

Goal:

To help parents promote their children's development by enabling them to use developmentally appropriate games and toys with their children in their own homes.

Steps:

1. Survey parents to see if there is interest in a toy lending library.
2. Identify and locate appropriate materials that could be used in the library.
3. Attend to the physical organization of the library.
4. Develop a recordkeeping system for cataloguing and keeping up with materials.
5. Develop lending policies and procedures for the upkeep of the materials.
6. Define duties and work schedules for parents and teachers involved in the maintenance of the library.

Benefits:

- Provides parents with the opportunity to play with their children.
- Gives day care providers the opportunity to add new toys to their program.
- Provides learning stimuli for children in their own home.

Problems:

- The day care provider has a very limited amount of money to purchase materials for the library.

- There is a high incidence of lost and damaged toys.

- The provider cannot get parents involved in staffing and general library operations.

Solutions:

- Solicit donations from local merchants. Conduct learning materials workshops in which parents and staff make games and toys from collected household and other "scrounge" materials. (**Workjobs and Workjobs for Parents** by Mary Baratta Lorton are excellent manuals which describe how to make and use learning activities with 3 to 6 year-olds.) Develop a proposal describing your toy lending library and attempt to get funding from various foundations. Use some classroom items to help stock the toy lending library.

- Have an orientation session for parents and children who will be using the library. Explain proper ways of caring for the toys and what is expected of parents and children using the library. Establish stiff penalties, including a suspension of borrowing privileges, for children and parents who persist in irresponsible use of the materials. Involve parents and children in the general maintenance of the library so that they develop a sense of responsibility for the library.

- Involve parents at the initial planning phase so that they will have an active role in the library right from the beginning. Possibly require a certain level of parental involvement in maintaining the library as an obligation for borrowing privileges.

Requirements / Resources Needed:

- A facility or space in the center to house the library materials.

- Games, toys, and equipment to stock the library.

- Interested people to plan, implement, and maintain the library. These could include staff, volunteer parents, work-study students, etc. One individual should agree to serve as librarian approximately five to ten hours per week.

- Parents willing to spend time regularly working with their children at home with the toys.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	2
Urban Programs	2

Type of Parents:

Approximately 20 parents were involved in the model pilot tests in both centers. Virtually all of these parents were employed and over half were single or divorced parents. Parental incomes for this model demonstration ranged from less than $8,000 to about $15,000.

Methods of Implementation:

- State worker introduced project and manual to providers and teachers.
- Center staff assembled necessary toys and conducted a demonstration for parents on how to use toys with their children in their homes.
- Parents selected the toys and checked them out.
- Parents used the toys with their children at home, and provided feedback to teachers.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Increased parent-staff cooperation.
- Inspired enthusiasm among children; children displayed better work habits.
- Staff developed more self-made materials.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

Providers, staff, and parents need a lot of technical assistance to implement this model.

Recommendations:

This model is best for those day care centers that have access to the staff, facilities, and equipment necessary for its successful coordination and implementation.

RESOURCES

THE BOOKER T. WASHINGTON TOY LENDING LIBRARY

This toy lending library was established by parents and teachers at the B.T.W. Children's Center in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1975. The underlying purpose of the library was to provide parents with the opportunity to involve themselves in their children's play and to improve the quality of the relationship between parents and their children.

The parent-staff committee responsible for planning and implementing the library developed simple but effective systems for cataloguing, displaying, and keeping track of materials in the library. The library started out with a small budget for toys; many of the center's classroom items were used as loan items.

For more information on the B.T.W. Toy Lending Library, contact Ms. Pam Pearce, B.T.W. Children's Center Coordinator at:

B.T.W. Children's Center
Early Childhood Education Department
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

PARENT-CHILD TOY LENDING LIBRARY PROGRAM

The Parent-Child Lending Library Program was developed by the Far West Laboratory in Berkeley, California. This toy lending library has two major components—a toy lending library and an eight-week, two hours per week training program which shows parents how to facilitate their children's development using materials they can borrow from the library. The materials in the library are geared for children from three to nine years old.

More information on the library program can be obtained by requesting a copy of the publication: **A Guide to Securing and Installing the Parent/Child Toy-Lending Library** ($1.55) which was written by Fred Rosenau and Betty Tuck from:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402

THE TOY LIBRARY, A HOW TO HANDBOOK

The Toy Library, A How To Handbook by Ellen Johnson is a resource book that outlines how to plan, implement, and maintain a toy lending library. Although the primary users of this library are day care providers, the information on setting up and running the library is equally applicable to toy lending libraries that focus on lending materials to children and parents.

Minnesota Curriculum Services Center
3554 White Bear Avenue
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
(612) 770-3943
$2.00

ACTIVITIES WORKSHOPS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: Workshops in which parents and caregivers make and explore learning materials to use with children, both at home and at the day care program.

Goal: To show parents how to develop self-made learning materials for their children and explore developmentally appropriate ways to use these materials at home and at the day care program.

Steps:

1. Find out if parents are interested in an activities workshop and enlist their help in making learning materials for the center or home.
2. Locate and review reference books describing how to make learning materials and decide which ones are most appropriate for your needs. Limit each session to no more than two or three projects.
3. Gather scrounge materials and basic supplies for the projects you plan to introduce.
4. Try it out yourself first—make one sample of each game you selected to see how much time it takes, whether it actually works and to identify the steps you will introduce to the parents.
5. Determine the most convenient time for the workshop and notify parents. You may decide to include the children; making learning materials together can be a family affair.
6. At the workshop:
   - Attractively set out all the materials parents will need for their projects.
   - Give a short introduction to each of the projects by showing them to parents, discussing the concepts/skills children can learn and ways parents can play with their children using the toy.

- Explain how you make the toy clearly outlining the steps. You may want to write them out on the board or prepare a chart.
- While parents (and perhaps children) are preparing their learning materials, be available to support and help them.

7. Conduct an informal evaluation at the end of the workshop to determine:
    - what parents liked best;
    - what they would like to see improved or changed;
    - what types of activities workshops they would like in the future.
8. Follow up with parents by talking with them informally about how they use the learning materials at home or by showing them how the children enjoy the materials they made at the center or home.

Benefits:

- Parents and providers can make valuable learning materials for children at almost **no cost.**
- Additional materials at home and at day care expand the child's opportunities for learning.
- Parents and providers become partners in making and using learning materials for children.
- If children are included in some of the activities workshops, the whole family learns together.
- Materials made by parents and providers are highly valued by children; they convey the message that someone important really cares.
- Parents can see immediate, tangible results of their involvement in the workshops. Positive results encourage parents to continue and/or expand their involvement.

Problems:

- It takes time to arrange the session, research the projects and determine what materials will be needed.
- Parents rarely come to meetings and have not expressed an interest in making materials.
- It's difficult to gather all the materials needed.

Solutions:

- Enlist the help of one or two parents. They can help you plan and organize the workshop.
- Display one or two learning materials you intend to have them make and informally show them to parents to arouse their interest.
- Make personal contact; a phone call from you or another parent to discuss the idea is more powerful than a written memo.
- Consider involving the children. Working parents are often more likely to attend when they can bring the children.
- Identify exactly what scrounge materials you need and send out a list to the parents. A short list of specific items receives more of a response than a long list.
- Use basic art materials you normally have for the children.
- Ask a parent to research places that supply scrounge materials: stores, factories, resource centers.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- A staff member or volunteer parent willing to serve as workshop organizer.
- Reference books on homemade toys and games (usually available at little or no cost).
- Free scrounge items (such as milk cartons, egg cartons, buttons, styrofoam, empty thread spools, etc.);
- Inexpensive art materials such as construction paper, glue, scissors, magic markers, tape, etc.
- Someplace to hold the workshops (the day care center, the family day care provider's home, the home of a parent).
- Parents willing to spend one to three hours in the activity workshop(s).

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	22
Day Care Homes	5
Rural Programs	17
Urban Programs	10

Type of Parents:

The overwhelming majority of parents involved in this model's demonstrations were employed either full time or part time. While income levels of the parents varied from program to program, the majority of the parents had incomes in the $8,000 to $24,000 range. Most parents participated in these workshops on a monthly basis.

Methods of Implementation:

- The State licensing worker introduced the project, model, and materials to providers.
- The providers gathered necessary materials to make toys and invited parents for an informal evening at the center.
- Providers and parents discussed the model at parent meetings and displayed some homemade items.
- Some providers polled parents to find a convenient time to hold toy making workshops.
- Providers posted notices of workshops and sent flyers home with children.
- Providers conducted workshops and demonstrated how to make items. Staff helped parents make toys at workshops. Workshops were held monthly.
- Providers followed up with parents on ways they were using homemade toys and related toys to the child's developmental stage and learning processes.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Increases communication between parents and staff.
- Relatively inexpensive to implement.
- Provides good model for family home settings.
- Offers variety; stimulates creativity in parents and staff.
- Increases time for parents and children to work together.
- Increases children's pride and self-image.
- Increases children's enjoyment of new toys.

- Reduces children's anxiety about leaving parents.
- Gives parents a better understanding of what program is all about.
- Gives parents a better understanding of their children's development.
- Increases parents' awareness of ways to work with their children.
- Reduces parents' guilt about leaving children to go to work.
- Often increases time parents spend with children at home.
- Encourages staff to generate ideas for activities.
- Helps staff get a better understanding of children and parents.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- The model requires an experienced leader or trainer for model to work best.
- It requires extensive preparation time.
- Parents are sometimes reluctant to do activities.
- Additional staff time required may be problem.
- Workshops are time-consuming; it may be hard to get working parents to commit necessary time.
- The games and materials made during workshops may not stand up well to constant use.

Recommendations:

This model is highly effective for day care programs—both centers and homes—seeking to draw parents into the program initially. If parents are already quite active in the program, on boards, committees, fund-raising, etc., this model may not be as appealing as it is when parental involvement of any kind is minimal. Workshops should always be well planned, focused, and purposeful, and should be offered at a convenient time for working parents to attend. Two hour workshops, offered on a monthly or quarterly basis, seem to work well for many programs.

RESOURCES

PARENTS AS RESOURCES (PAR)

The PAR program has developed publications based on workshops offered to parents in communities across the country. The workshops involve direct parent participation in activities as a means for stimulating parents to have fun learning with their children. PAR has trained hundreds of workshop leaders, many of them parents, to conduct workshops with other parent groups. They have published "recipe" activity booklets of games and ways to make and use learning materials at home. PAR publications are available from CBH Publishing, Inc. (see address below).

THE BIG BOOK OF RECIPES FOR FUN

This book by Carolyn Buhai Haas is filled with practical, step by step descriptions of how to make creative learning activities and games for home and school. The games are organized in categories such as "Arts and Crafts Recipes," "Nature Activities," "Weighing and Measuring," "Cooking Fun," and many more. It is available for $2.00 from CBH Publishing, Inc., 464 Central, Northfield, Illinois, 60093. A **Workshop Procedures** booklet which describes how to conduct an activities workshop is available from the same publishing company.

WORKJOBS FOR PARENTS

This book by Mary Baratta-Lorton is an excellent resource for conducting activities workshops. It describes 43 "workjobs" parents can make and use with their three to six-year olds. The author clearly delineates the materials needed, skills gained, and how to use each of the games with children. Photographs of the games make them easy to duplicate. **Workjobs for Parents** is published by Addison Wesley Co. in Reading, Massachusetts, for $6.60 and is available from many book distributors.

TABLE TOYS, A CREATIVE CURRICULUM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Based on practical workshops with hundreds of teachers, this book offers suggested ways to use toys commonly found in most early childhood settings such as pegs and peg boards, beads and laces, counting cubes and parquetry, or pattern blocks. It includes descriptions of toys which can be made inexpensively by parents and teachers, and how to use these toys to extend learning. Developed by Creative Associates, the **Table Toys** manual is available for $6.95.

TEACHABLES FROM TRASHABLES

A well illustrated book by Toys 'N' Things full of ideas on how to make "junk" objects into inexpensive, safe, and educational toys for young children. For each toy, the authors list the age group for whom it is designed, how to use the toy, what it does, what you need to make it, and how to make it. Teachers and parents would have little trouble following the directions. Distributed by Gryphon House, P.O. Box 217, Mt. Rainer, Maryland, 20822, for $6.95.

PARENTS ARE TEACHERS TOO!

This book by Jeanne Lybecker and Jacki Posner includes 45 activities designed to help parents provide significant educational experiences for their preschool children. The activities are both described and illustrated. For each activity, the authors list the objectives, materials, construction steps, and how to play the games. Available from Gryphon House for $5.50. (See address above.)

DROP-IN CENTERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition:

Drop-in centers offer parents intermittent child care services on an "as needed" basis. Some provide parenting information, periodic relief from childrearing responsibilities and assistance to parents who deserve help with their daily problems and the tensions of family life.

Goal:

To enable parents to function optimally by providing parenting support as needed, temporary child care services and opportunities to interact with peers and other adults.

Steps:

1. Determine the need for the program by talking with parents and conducting a neighborhood assessment.
2. Convene a meeting of interested parents to discuss what type of drop-in center will be appropriate and who will be served.
3. Discuss the resources you will need to initiate the program. (examples: paid staff or volunteers? a new location or a room at the day care facility?)
4. Assess what materials and equipment you already have which can be used by the program.
5. Identify tasks which must be completed and obtain commitments from staff and parents.
6. Publicize the service.
7. Start small and continually evaluate progress.

Benefits:

- Drop-in centers provide parents with relief from child rearing responsibility and intermittent child care service for their children.

- Parents develop friendships and extend their support network.
- Parents can learn from each other as well as from the staff.
- Children have a safe environment in which to play and learn.

Problems:

- It costs too much money to run a drop-in center.
- It is difficult to find skilled staff.

Solutions:

- Consider having a drop-in center open just on Saturdays, using the day care facility as a site.
- Recruit volunteers to staff the program. Conduct fundraising efforts. Use funds raised for orientation and ongoing training by professionals.

Requirements/ Resources needed:

- A place with comfortable furniture for adults and children.
- Equipment and materials for children; particularly if program is not in center.
- Trained staff or volunteers to run the program.
- Start up and operating funds for staff and equipment. Costs will vary depending on the programs' size, hours of operation, location, and the number and type of staff involved.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers: Only one program, a child development center in Parkdale, Oregon, pilot tested this model. The model, implemented once a week for six weeks during the field test, is being continued by the program on a monthly basis.

Type of Parents: An average of seven parents were involved in each session of the model demonstration by this program. The center had a mixture of White, Hispanic and Native American families. All parents were employed either full time or part time.

Methods of Implementation:

- The center initiated a six-week Friday Family Focus day featuring guest speakers. The center publicized the model with parents at the center and in the larger community.
- The center provided child care and lunch for parents who participated.
- The model established a theme of improving community relations.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Increases parent-staff communication.
- Provides information for parents on parenting and other topics.
- Gives parents a better view of center as a community resource.
- Helps ease the children's separation anxiety.
- Assists staff to become more aware of the importance of parent involvement.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Requires lots of technical assistance.
- Need additional trained staff to implement. Difficult to use volunteers.
- Expensive to set up; requires additional funding to start up and maintain.

Recommendations:

Because of the time and expense involved, this model is not practical for single family day care providers to attempt on their own. However, providers may want to initiate this program through their Family Day Care Association, thereby pooling their resources and serving a wider range of parents. Day care centers that attempt to implement the model should be mindful of the administrative costs involved and determine in advance an approach to obtaining the necessary funds and support.

RESOURCES

FAMILY FOCUS PROGRAM

The Family Focus Program operates a drop-in center designed to give parents the support they need to feel good about themselves so that they in turn can help their child develop self-esteem and confidence. The program offers a warm, supportive environment for the entire family. Activities are planned to accommodate working and single parents. It is a place where parents can meet together, share concerns, and develop their own methods of self-help. According to Bernice Weissbourd, the founder of Family Focus:

> The earliest years of child rearing are a crucial period for families. The assistance parents received from the extended family or earlier generations is seldom present, and community services, with the exception of those for the handicapped, are virtually nonexistent.

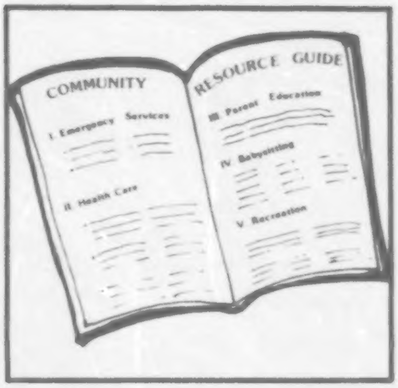
Family Focus operates three drop-in centers and one "out-post" center for adolescent parents. All of the centers have the following characteristics:

- Centers are staffed by professionals and paraprofessionals who possess skills in social work and early childhood education. In addition, students from local universities work at the centers.
- Centers are open from 30 to 35 hours a week. Parents are welcome to come with their children and stay as long as they choose. No fees or registration are required.
- A monthly calendar and newsletter highlight workshops, groups, and special events. Activities are planned for parents and children together and for children while their parents attend discussion groups.
- A developmental program for children is coordinated by the staff who model ways to care and respond to children. Temporary child care offers relief for parents under stress and an opportunity to detect developmental problems.
- Parents form self-help groups develop friendships and learn to be resourceful about meeting their own needs.
- Community Advocacy Councils and Parent Groups represent neighborhood agencies and parents and act as a link to community resources for referral and consultation. These groups also advise on program policy for the center.

An excellent resource for providers who wish to implement or adapt this model is **Creating Drop-In Centers: The Family Focus Model** by Lorraine B. Wallach and Bernice Weissbourd. It gives a step-by-step description of how to start a center, from developing the initial concepts to finding funding and hiring staff.

It is available from:

Family Focus, Inc.
2300 Green Bay Road
Evanston, IL 60201



RESOURCE NETWORKS AND GUIDES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: Listings of services and organizations which might be needed by families, such as health clinics, legal services, recreational facilities, cooperatives, and job and career counseling.

Goal: To enable parents to make maximum use of the community resources available to them by providing up-to-date information about these resources.

Steps:

1. Determine the need for and extent of interest in a resource guide.
2. Identify a small group of people to work on developing the guide.
3. Conduct an assessment to determine the types of services currently used or needed by the families you serve.
4. Assess the costs of producing and duplicating the guide and determine whether you need to raise funds to cover expenses or charge money for the guide.
5. Contact people within organizations that provide such services to confirm the nature and extent of the services provided.
6. Put together a written guide that lists and annotates these services plus a contact person who can handle inquiries.
7. Distribute these guides to parents.
8. Make follow-up calls to a contact person in these organizations, if possible, to ensure that you always have an accurate resource network for referral purposes.

Benefits:

- Resource guides are especially helpful to new families.

- The guides improve access to services needed by families.
- Guides are concrete, tangible, and good referral tools for providers.

Problems:

- You may have to locate funds to prepare and reproduce the guide.
- There's a lot of information to collect and document, and this takes time.
- Information gets dated and may not be applicable from one year to the next.

Solutions:

- Use volunteer help to research and write the information. A parent with graphic skills may be willing to put the information into an attractive and usable format. Consider charging a fee for the guide.
- The initial guide does take time, but you don't have to cover everything. Start small! Ask parents to suggest organizations and services they use. Call these organizations to learn about others.
- Ask a volunteer to make occasional calls to agencies to keep information up-to-date. Have parents report to you when they find information is no longer accurate.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- People (program staff or parent volunteers) willing to research and record information for the resource guide on a volunteer basis.
- Volunteers to type up the information in a format for the guide.
- Access to duplicating services to reproduce copies of the guide.
- People willing to update the guide periodically.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers: Two day care centers field tested this model. Both centers were in large southern cities.

Type of Parents: Parents involved in these model demonstrations were employed full time. One center had mostly dual parent families in the $15,000-$24,000 income range, while the other program served mostly single parents with incomes below $8,000.

Methods of Implementation:

- Providers conducted parent needs assessment to determine parental needs and interest.
- Providers phoned parents to explain model and project and ask for volunteers.
- Providers assigned an area of the directory to each parent.
- Staff worked with parents to get them started and then parents took over.
- Parents and staff collected information and compiled directory, typed and published it and distributed it to other parents.
- Other program implemented model as center-based newsletter.
- Staff got news items from all staff and involved parents.
- Staff distributed newsletter to parents.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Offers concrete results; parents can see their accomplishment right away.
- Provides useful information for non-day care users as well.
- Allows staff and parents to gain greater awareness of available resources.
- Staff and parents become more aware of the community resources available to them. They can make better referrals.
- Gives staff and parents a better understanding of the need for coordination.
- Everyone can take pride in the finished product.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Difficult to get parents to participate initially.

- Needs lots of coordination to complete and more staff time than most are willing to volunteer.
- Requires additional funds to implement properly.

Recommendations: This model is excellent for day care programs in large communities where parents are less likely to be aware of all of the community resources. It is also a good model for programs serving highly mobile families, such as military child care programs. Its relative low cost and concrete, practical nature make it a good place to start for programs with little or no existing parental involvement.

RESOURCES

HEAD START—SOCIAL SERVICE COMPONENT

The Head Start social service component has a proven process for putting together resource guides. They also put out a book that is available on a limited basis called "A Guide for Providing Social Services in Head Start," which can be borrowed from your local Head Start office or obtained free by writing:

Richard H. Johnson
Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau
Washington, DC 20201

FAMILY FOCUS PROJECT

The Family Focus Project has an excellent resource guide entitled, **The Parents' Pages.** It is well organized and designed and can serve as a model for programs wishing to develop their own resource guide. It can be ordered for $4.95 per copy from:

Family Focus, Inc.
2300 Green Bay Road
Evanston, IL 60201

PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition:

Self-help groups in which the members meet to share and discuss common concerns and interests. Members learn from each other and provide emotional support and ideas on child rearing.

Goal:

To share parenting experiences (successes and stresses) with other parents and/or resource people in an effort to grow and learn from others.

Steps:

1. Talk to others interested in forming a support group. Start with two or three parents who already know each other from the day care or family home program. Try to keep the group to under ten members.
2. Locate a meeting space. It could be the center or homes of parents.
3. Schedule the first meeting at a time convenient for group members.
4. Discuss issues of mutual as well as of individual concern. Determine collective interest in continuing.
5. Decide on the group structure. Determine the need for a facilitator or therapist. If the structure is informal, rotate responsibility for convening the group among members.
6. Decide on and define the topics the group will consider.
7. Set up a regular meeting schedule and ensure agreement among all participants.
8. Establish rules that will govern the group, ensure confidentiality, participation of all members, and a nonjudgmental atmosphere.

Benefits:

- Support groups help families overcome a sense of isolation and often serve as an extended family.

- Members learn that others share their concerns and struggles.
- Members are able to provide support to others— and to receive support as well.
- Support groups give members an opportunity to expand their knowledge and broaden their perspectives on parenting and child rearing practices.

Problems:

- People are often reluctant to discuss their personal lives.
- Some members dominate discussions and others are hesitant to participate.
- Discussions tend to ramble and lose focus.
- Interest and attendance tend to wane.

Solutions:

- Members must respect each other's privacy outside the group.
- Establish rules ensuring that each person has an opportunity to talk. Identify a facilitator who can handle group dynamics.
- Have the group agree on a topic for the next meeting and ask each person to be prepared to share a concern or idea on the topic.
- Periodically evaluate the sessions and be prepared to revise the group's focus. Share the responsibility for calling group members and encouraging them to attend.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- Parents who share common needs and interests and who are willing to meet with others for mutual support and growth.
- A convenient meeting place.
- A knowledgeable person to provide technical assistance or to serve as group facilitator.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Provider: This model was field tested in one day care center in a western city.

Type of Parents: The parents involved in this center were mostly employed full time with family incomes in the $8,000 to $24,000 range. Only about 20 percent were single parents.

Methods of Implementation:

- Provider distributed a parent interest questionnaire to parents.
- Parents indicated interest in opportunities to meet with other parents, hear speakers, share with one another, and bring their children along.
- Model was adapted from a parent support group to a parent-to-parent meeting.
- Center provided child care and speaker for parents on issues of interest to them.
- Parents were given opportunity to share with one another.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Parents become more a part of the program.
- Increases communication among parents.
- Provides opportunity for parents to do fun things with one another and with their children.

Provider Cited Disadvantages: None were cited by this provider. However, to work best, the model does require additional staff time for planning and coordination.

Recommendations: While this model appears fairly easy to implement, the time required to plan and coordinate effective parent support sessions should not be overlooked. Good coordination and planning are the key to success with this model. A recommended initial approach to the model is to have an interested parent plan an enjoyable first session to spark parents' interest and enthusiasm. By involving parents in the planning process from the beginning, you will increase your chances for success with this model.

RESOURCES

PRE-SCHOOL AND INFANT PARENTING SERVICE (PIPS)

The PIPS program, which began as a telephone support service for parents, eventually expanded into a comprehensive program which now includes parent support groups. Staff members conduct regular meetings at the center for mothers and infants; mothers and toddlers; and single mothers. Spontaneous support groups have also evolved from the "Parents' House," a clubhouse for parents.

For more information, contact:

Helen Reid
Clinical Coordinator
Preschool and Infant Parenting Service
8857 Saturn Street
Los Angeles, CA 90035

THE FAMILY FOCUS PROGRAM

Though this program is structured primarily as a drop-in center, one important component is its parent support group. Through the drop-in vehicle, new contacts and friendships are made; participants are encouraged to develop mutual aid and self-help groups. The program assists and gives support in the form of meeting places, staff facilitators, counseling, and information sharing.

For more information, contact:

Family Focus, Inc.
2300 Green Bay Road
Evanston, IL 60201

COOPERATIVES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: A cooperative is a group in which people share the responsibility for meeting the common needs of the individual group members. These needs can be for babysitting, for transporting children, or for buying food collectively.

Goal: To collectively obtain or maximize the use of goods or services that would be otherwise unavailable on an individual basis.

Steps:

1. Identify a common need where cooperation can help solve the problem. Examples are babysitting, transportation, buying food or clothes, etc.
2. Talk to others who share the same needs.
3. Convene a core group committed to organizing the coop.
4. Meet to determine the steps and resources needed to solve the problem.
5. Outline the tasks involved and make assignments. Consult with other coops in the area, review by-laws, etc.
6. Decide on the organizational structure of the group including the procedures for making decisions.
7. Locate necessary resources such as space, supplies, and equipment.
8. Decide on a regular schedule for tasks and make sure participants are commtted to it.
9. Prepare any necessary forms, books, or procedures for record-keeping, providing the service, getting new members, and so on.

10. Establish by-laws and written procedures to ensure a common base of understanding for all members.

Benefits:

- Coops can save members a lot of money for goods and services.
- Coops promote cooperation among members.
- Coops are a form of self-help and support at a time when families feel isolated.

Problems:

- Getting each person to carry out a task in a timely and efficient manner can be difficult.
- A few people often end up carrying the burden of making the process run smoothly.
- Enthusiasm wanes over time.

Solutions:

- Identify a coordinator to oversee the process. This can be a rotating position. Assign tasks according to individual capabilities and time constraints. Develop a system where those who put in more effort receive more benefits.
- Involve everyone in defining goals and expectations. Be sure everyone is clear about his/her responsibilities.
- Make it a social as well as an economic function. Evaluate the system periodically to determine how successful the coop is and what benefits have been achieved.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- People willing to cooperative with each other by giving time, resources, or money to get what is needed for mutual benefit.
- An interested parent or staff member willing to take the time initially to get the ball rolling.
- Access to individuals knowledgeable about cooperatives or who are members of existing coops nearby.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Provider:

- A small day care center in a rural northwestern community pilot tested this model.

Type of Parents:

- All of the centers' parents were employed outside of the home and the majority were two parent families.

Methods of Implementation:

- Provider reviewed materials on project and talked to parents to determine interest.
- Parents decided on type of coop to try—a babysitting coop in this case.
- Provider held meeting for interested parents to plan coops; only three parents came.
- Provider obtained by-laws from another successful coop in the area.
- The group was unable to sustain coop, but felt process of trying to establish it was useful.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- When it works, it offers resource for parents who need babysitters.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- It is difficult to get working parents interested in babysitting during evenings and weekends.

Recommendations:

Because the success of this model depends so heavily on the willingness of parents to contribute their spare time, providers should carefully assess the level of parental interest from the outset. Food or transportation coops may be more practical or realistic for programs serving mostly working parents than are babysitting coops. It is a good idea to consult with members of other successful coops in the area before launching your own.

RESOURCES

BABY-SITTING COOPERATIVE

Baby-sitting cooperatives can be an informal arrangement among several families who care for each other's children as necessary, or it can be a formal arrangement among a larger group of people. Often parents with children in the same day care center set up a babysitting coop.

In a babysitting coop, members take turns sitting for each other's children. Several systems can be used to keep track of the hours each family owes the coop. One system is to give each new family "chits" or tickets for five hours of sitting along with a list of members. Families then make individual arrangements for sitters and trade chits or tickets. Another system is to have a member of each family serve as secretary on a rotating basis. The secretary keeps a tally sheet for each family, which lists the hours it sits for other families and the hours it uses sitters. When a member wishes to obtain a babysitter, he or she calls the secretary and puts in a request. The secretary then calls other members, starting with those who owe the most hours, and arranges the time and place. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of a successful babysitting cooperative in Williston, North Dakota, are included in the Appendix.

FOOD COOPERATIVES

Food cooperatives are probably the most complicated kind of cooperative used by families. However, they can also save the most money. They accomplish this by buying food wholesale. Because of the nature of the service, food cooperatives generally need to be fairly well structured.

Most food cooperatives or food buying clubs require an average of two hours per week per member. However, large cooperatives often hire paid staff, with members putting in little or no time.

Here are some tips to remember when operating a food cooperative:

1. Start the club with the most popular items in the beginning and expand from there.
2. Have a specific time for handling orders and make sure orders are submitted in writing on standard forms. Telephone orders are very hard to keep track of.
3. Have the following items available at the drop off and pick up point: scale, bags (paper and plastic), marking pencils, calculator, $20 in change, order blanks for the following week.
4. Agree on a prepaid amount (10-15 percent of a person's order) to

cover operating and supply costs.

5. Prepack each person's order before pick-up to save time.
6. Decide what to do with left over supplies and secure storage (refrigerators or storage bins, for example), if needed.

FOOTSTEPS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition:

A Federally-funded parent education program consisting of 30 half-hour video tapes and supporting materials which address a variety of child rearing topics.

Each half-hour show contains a 20-minute dramatization of parenting situations or child rearing problems in a family centered context, followed by a brief commentary by parents and child development experts. The series explores realistic themes, such as helping children cope with death, resolving childhood fears, dealing with independence, indentifying problems in young children, and prenatal preparation.

Goal:

To help parents broaden their knowledge of child development and improve their child rearing skills.

Steps:

1. Determine the level of parental interest in viewing and discussing the Footsteps series.
2. Identify a staff member or volunteer parent willing to serve as program coordinator for the series.
3. Investigate whether the series is being aired on the local Public Broadcasting Station and obtain broadcast schedule. If unavailable on television, arrange to obtain film series from the National Audio Visual Center.
4. Obtain the necessary resource materials which accompany the films (e.g. home viewer guide and discussion guides).
5. Decide on a convenient place to meet to view the programs and conduct discussions.
6. Notify parents of the dates and locations of each session well in advance.

7. If showing films or video cassettes, ensure that the necessary audiovisual equipment is available for each session, along with someone to operate the equipment.
8. Provide a knowledgeable person to lead the discussion following each viewing segment.
9. Periodically evaluate how the sessions are progressing.

Benefits:

- Parents increase their knowledge of child development and learn about different child rearing methods.
- Day care providers can save time by using this existing parent education curriculum, rather than designing one from scratch.
- The episodes depict realistic parenting situations and offer opportunities for parent to parent exchange of ideas.

Problems:

- The films are expensive and time consuming to obtain.
- It may be difficult to get a discussion leader for every session.

Solutions:

- Organize parents to write or phone the local PBS station requesting the Footsteps program. Work with the station management to see that the programs are aired at a convenient time for working parents.
- Organize parents to take turns leading the discussions. Make sure each potential discussion leader is familiar with the supporting resource materials in advance.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- Access to the video segments on the local PBS station or the films from the National Audio Visual Center. The films range in price from \$12.50 per film for rental to \$174.00 per film for purchase.
- Sufficient Copies of the **Home Viewer Guide** and the **Discussion Guide.**
- A volunteer to study the materials before each session and lead the group discussion following the films. Parents willing to spend one hour each session for 30 sessions.

- A convenient place to hold the sessions.
- Someone willing to coordinate the effort from start to finish.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	10
Day Care Homes	3
Urban Program	7
Rural Program	6

Type of Parents:

Virtually all of the parents in the programs that field tested this model were employed outside the home on a part-time or full-time basis. While a few parents had incomes below $8,000 or above $24,000, most fell in the $8,000 to $24,000 income range. Approximately equal numbers of single parent families and two-parent families were involved in the model demonstrations.

Methods of Implementation:

- Providers introduced the model to parents.
- Providers involved parents in selecting which films to show. They established a schedule for showing films.
- Providers made arrangements to obtain the films from the contractor. State workers assisted.
- Providers sent notices to parents before each film was shown.
- Sessions were held in the day care center or home or other convenient location.
- Programs provided refreshments and free child care to parents viewing films.
- Providers used Footsteps Guides and held discussions after each film.
- One program incorporated model into its regular parenting classes.
- Most programs held weekly one hour sessions.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- It is easy to get all participants involved in the discussion.
- The model opens communications among parents.
- It's easy to implement.
- Films give realistic portrayals of real family situations.
- Program creates mutual help among parents.
- Supplemental materials are good.
- The model sparks parental enthusiasm.
- Parents become more confident in working with their children.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Logistics of obtaining films and materials are difficult to handle.
- Good time for working parents to meet is hard to arrange.
- This model requires additional support, such as babysitters, transportation, etc.
- This model requires a knowledgeable A/V person.
- Timely receipt of films is difficult to ensure.
- The model requires lots of staff time to coordinate.
- It is difficult to sustain parents' interest in attending all sessions.
- Parental involvement in other aspects of the program may decline when parents get involved in Footsteps series.
- Transportation to the sessions and babysitting can be a problem.

Recommendations:

While Footsteps is an excellent parenting series, the cost and logistics associated with obtaining the films when not available through PBS inhibit its replicability in day care settings. This is especially true for single family day care providers and small center operaters with limited resources. The fact that the discussion guides build so closely on the film content makes this model difficult to adapt for use without the films. However, it is a highly recommended parenting series for providers located in areas where the series can be seen on television.

RESOURCES

The following resource materials are used in conjunction with the broadcast to offer information and ideas for discussion by parents:

1. A **home viewer guide** containing a discussion of the ideas presented in the show, a bibliography of parenting resource materials, and suggestions for activities to enhance parental interactions with their children is available from:

   FOOTSTEPS
   Pueblo, CO 81009
   $3.50

2. A **two-page discussion guide** can be used by parenting education groups in conjunction with the Footsteps broadcasts to stimulate discussions on parenting issues. The guides contain background information on themes discussed, a bibliography, information sheets for distribution to parents in the parenting education group, a synopsis of each broadcast, discussion questions, and activities for parents. The guide is available from:

   University Press
   300 North Charles Street
   Baltimore, MD 21201
   (301) 547-0700
   Part 1 - Programs 1-20 $4.95
   Part 2 - Programs 21-30 $5.95

3. **Audiovisual aids** (in cases where series is not available on television). Footsteps Film series is available from:

   The National Audio Visual Center
   National Archives and Records Service
   General Service Administration
   Order Section
   8700 Edgeworth Drive
   Washington, DC 20743
   (301) 763-1896

		Rental	Sale
Films	Total Series	$250.00	$3,000.00
	Individual	12.50	174.00
Video Cassette	Total Series		$1,300.00
	Individual		75.00

To facilitate a group, the day care provider or parent would need to read over the discussion guide and, if possible, duplicate information sheets for parents.

EXPLORING PARENTING

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition:

A comprehensive parent education model developed by and for the Head Start Bureau. The curriculum consists of 20 three-hour sessions during which parents view films, listen to recordings, and use information sheets designed to foster discussions. Parents are actually involved in the sessions which are led by specially trained Exploring Parenting Group Leaders.

Goal:

To help make parents more aware of their parenting skills, build upon their existing child rearing skills and increase their knowledge of different parenting styles and techniques.

Steps:

1. Determine level of parental interest.
2. Identify someone to coordinate the series.
3. Contact the local Head Start Program to arrange for a trained group leader to conduct the program.
4. Obtain the necessary materials from the local Head Start Program or Regional Head Start Resource and Training Center.
5. Obtain commitments from the parents to attend the agreed upon sessions.
6. Arrange for a convenient place and time to hold the sessions.
7. Periodically evaluate the sessions for sustained parental interest.

Benefits:

- Parents increase their knowledge of child development and learn about different child rearing methods.
- Day care providers can save time by using this existing parent education curriculum, rather than designing one from scratch.

- The episodes depict realistic parenting situations and offer opportunities for parent to parent exchange of ideas.

Problems:

- The training must be conducted by a trained group leader.
- The Exploring Parenting materials are not readily available to the non Head Start public.
- The program could be expensive to implement if group leaders had to be paid, materials xeroxed and films rented.

Solutions:

- Local Head Start programs may be helpful in locating trained group leaders to lead the sessions.
- If a complete set of materials can be obtained from the local Head Start program, providers are free to duplicate copies. Some Head Start programs may have extra materials they would be willing to donate. Films, records and two of the booklets are available for rent or purchase from the Education Development Center located at 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts, 02160.
- Several programs could pool their resources to offer the program collectively for their parents, given enough interest.

Requirements; Resources Needed:

- Access to a trained Exploring Parenting Group Leader willing to conduct the sessions.
- Access to sufficient copies of all necessary materials, including: A Leader's Guide, A Manual for Group Leaders, Parent Information Sheets, "Doing Things" booklet, "Picturing Development Booklet," three records and ten films.
- Parents willing to spend three hours per session for 20 sessions.
- Someone willing to coordinate the logistical arrangements from start to finish.
- A convenient place and time to hold the sessions.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	3
Family Day Care Homes	2
Rural Programs	5

Type of Parents: Programs pilot testing this model served working parents with incomes between $8,000 and $24,000, with a few exceptions. There were slightly more single parent families than two-parent families involved in these programs.

Methods of Implementation:

- The Exploring Parenting Trainer conducted group leader training sessions for providers.
- Providers conducted informal weekly parent sessions in a home.
- Providers obtained technical assistance from the contractor in getting necessary films and materials.
- One center had two hour weekly sessions at the center.
- Another used the parent sessions to teach a parenting class at a local women's clinic.
- Providers relied on the Exploring Parenting materials more than the Provider Manual.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Offers well organized and structured materials.
- Emphasizes parents role as educator of own child.
- Provides room for dialogue among parents.
- Encourages increased parent communication with staff and with other parents.
- Helps parents become more confident of their own parenting abilities.
- Helps staff members to become more confident and to communicate better with parents.
- Helps children become more relaxed and open with parents.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Time commitment required of parents and staff is unrealistic for day care (three-hour sessions for 20 weeks).
- Model doesn't apply to parents of teenagers.
- Some sessions are not realistic for provider situations.
- Model places unrealistic logistical demands on small programs or family day care.

Recommendations:

The current unavailability of the Exploring Parenting Materials outside of Head Start programs makes this excellent model virtually impossible to replicate in day care settings at the present time. However, should the materials become available to programs other than Head Start in the future, this model is excellent for medium to large day care programs or networks of family day care homes interested in parent education. The inherent logistical and transportation problems make it advisable for rural programs to work out transportation arrangements well in advance of sessions. And, the length of the program, 20 three-hour sessions, suggests that providers ensure the continued interest and commitment from working parents to stick with the program before they invest a lot of time and effort. Day care programs wishing to obtain further information about how to obtain the Exploring Parenting Materials should contact the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Provider in their state or write to:

Mr. Richard Johnson
Head Start Bureau
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, DC 20013

PARENT COMMITTEES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: Groups of parents who have agreed to give assistance to the provider by assuming responsibility for specified tasks. Parent committees usually have a coordinator and meet only when their services are required.

Goal: To perform specific tasks necessary for a successful day care program which cannot be as effectively performed by the provider and staff alone (example: raising funds for new kitchen; building new playground; maintaining the grounds; conducting a clothing drive, etc.).

Steps:

1. Ask each parent, at enrollment, to contribute a minimum number of hours to program maintenance during the year.
2. Determine what tasks need to be performed during the year to maintain the program. Provider and staff prepare this list. A committee is set up to handle each task. Committees are staffed by parents, one of whom coordinates the work of the others.
3. Identify a parent to coordinate each committee. A personal request from the director is most effective.
4. Prepare a list of each committee and the tasks each will assume. Circulate this list to the parents and ask them to sign up for a committee.
5. Identify one parent to be responsible for keeping track of the number of hours each parent works. Coordinators report to him or her after a work session. It is often helpful to have a form prepared for this purpose.
6. When a task needs to be done, the provider simply notifies the coordinator of the appropriate committee. He or she then organizes the committee members.
7. It is important to let parents know their contribution is valued. Tell

them exactly **how** they are doing a good job.

Benefits:

- Each parent contributes a small amount of time, but a lot of work is accomplished.
- Children see that their parents care and have input into their day care program.
- Providers are relieved of many time-consuming tasks in exchange for a minimum amount of time to organize the committees.

Problems:

- It takes time to organize committees and to follow up to see that the work is accomplished.
- The model is not appropriate for a small center or family home.
- Parents have enough to do and feel that they are already paying for the child care services they receive.

Solutions:

- Coordinators can do a lot of this work. They should be carefully selected by the provider who then simply needs to maintain phone contact.
- While committees are not necessary in a small program, family home providers **can** ask each parent to make a commitment to donate a certain number of hours each year to program maintenance.
- Explain to parents how important their involvement is and how the fees do not cover the costs of running a child care program. Be sure to make parents feel that their contribution is valued.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- Parents
- Volunteer Committee Coordinators.

FIELD TEST DEMONSTRATION RESULTS

Type of Providers:

Day Care Centers	6
Family Day Care Homes	1
Urban Programs	6
Rural Programs	1

Type of Parents: Parents involved in this model's pilot tests were mostly employed full time outside of the home. Parental income levels were similar to those found in other models. Approximately half of the parents were single and half married.

Methods of Implementation

- The provider or program staff introduced the model using Provider Manual.
- Model was used in some programs to strengthen existing committees and in others to establish new ones.
- Parents volunteered to participate in the committee structure and plan.
- Committee members established clear objectives. Monthly meetings were generally held. Meetings averaged one hour in length.

Provider Cited Advantages:

- Can be adapted to different types of programs.
- Increases parent staff cooperation.
- Specifies tasks for parents to do for easy implementation.
- Reduces work load for overworked staff and directors.
- Lets parents see clear accomplishment when the tasks are completed.
- Allows staff and parents to get better understanding of benefits of involvement.
- Causes parents to feel they are a part of program.
- Causes children to become more excited about the program.

Provider Cited Disadvantages:

- Hard to find good meeting time.
- Difficult to reach all parents.
- Hard to maintain parents' enthusiasm.
- Difficult to collect fines or impose penalties when parents don't participate.

Recommendations: This model is very effective for programs seeking new and concrete ways of involving parents and for programs attempting to reach out beyond the core of regulars to involve different parents. For optimal success with working parents, meetings or work sessions should be brief, well organized, and held at convenient times for parents. This model is easier for day care centers to implement than it is for family day care homes, because centers have more parents and more staff. However, it is ideal for family day care associations or networks willing to organize a coordinated parent committee structure to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

RESOURCES

RESTON CHILDREN'S CENTER

The Reston Children's Center in Virginia is a good example of a program in which parent committees provide considerable support to the director. The program serves 160 families, each of which contributes ten hours of work a year. It is a diversified program offering many types of care: an all day center based program, half day nursery school and kindergarten, after-school care, and satellite family homes. Madeline Fried, the director, sees parents as her mainstay and manages to use parents as an important resource to accomplish the goals of her multifaceted program. "Day care requires a lot of expertise," she says, "and while directors have a lot, they don't have it all. Parents can be especially helpful if given specific tasks to match their skills." The committees vary from one year to the next, depending on program needs. Recently, the center built a new facility, so a landscaping committee was organized. Other committees include:

- interior maintenance;
- fundraising;
- classroom support—substituting in the classroom, helping on field trips, making equipment and materials for the classroom;
- office support—typing, xeroxing;
- sewing;
- telephoning—reminding parents of meetings.

Madeline Fried would be happy to share her experiences with parent committees. Write to her at:

Reston Children's Center
12100 Sunset Hills Road
Reston, VA 22090

PARENT BOARDS*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: A group of people who serve in an advisory or decision making capacity and who accept responsibility for guiding the day care program.

Goal: To advise and/or govern the day care program and director.

Steps:

1. Decide whether you want to set up a formal structure by incorporating as a nonprofit organization. Advantages are that it ensures an ongoing structure to sustain the program, limits personal liability, and provides tax-exempt status which helps in fundraising. The provider must be willing to share decision making responsibilities with others.
2. Define the responsibilities of the Board. For example:
    - Policy making—the Board is responsible for creating and setting educational policies, personnel and hiring policies, and overall program priorities.
    - Administration—the Board oversees the administration of the program, ensuring that policies and plans are carried out.
    - Financial—the Board is accountable for the money and other assets of the corporation. It reviews, advises on, and approves budgets prepared by the director.
3. Develop by-laws which set forth the rules and procedures for running the organization.
4. Orient new Board members. Some suggestions follow:
    - Maintain a folder containing information on the center's program,

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*This model was not fully pilot tested. Therefore, no model data were obtained from the field work period.

by-laws, Board responsibilities, finances, and current Board members. Make this information available to new Board members. Invite new Board members to attend the last Board meeting prior to their term.

- Set aside time at the first Board meeting of every year to provide an orientation for new Board members.
- Ask outgoing Board members to provide information to new members about their former roles.

5. Select officers: chairperson, secretary, treasurer.
6. Establish committees to do the Board's work such as program and curriculum planning, nominating, and financial planning.
7. Appoint or solicit one individual who will monitor the Board and keep on top of everything that is happening. One person must assume responsibility for coordinating the work of the Board; this may be the Director of a program, the Chairperson of the Board, or a designated member of the staff. This person can do the following:
   - Meet with new Board members to explain the operation of the Board.
   - Be available to answer questions Board members may have regarding issues on the agenda.
   - Telephone Board members once a month to inform them of good news as well as problems. This is especially appropriate for programs that do not have monthly Board meetings.
8. Run good meetings. Here are some tips:
   - Conduct get acquainted exercises with new groups to make sure everyone knows everyone else.
   - Welcome late-comers, introduce them, and explain what you are doing.
   - Have a sense of humor.
   - Be considerate of the needs of group members by choosing a convenient meeting location, serving refreshments, or providing transportation or child care.

- Notify everyone personally about the meeting, and call absent members after the meeting to bring them up to date. Assign tasks. Be sure to send absent members a copy of the minutes.
- Start on time; prepare an agenda and stick to it; end promptly.
- Ensure participation by everyone. If important issues are to be discussed, let people know in advance. If necessary, give background information for new members so they can participate fully.
- Make sure that no one dominates the meeting, and encourage shy members to share their ideas. If necessary, call them up later to find out what they are thinking.
- Try to reach a consensus on important decisions. Be sure all important objections are raised and explored. Make decisions and see that they get implemented.
- Follow up on assignments as necessary. Review assignments which people have accepted at previous meetings and see if they have completed the tasks. If not, ask if extra help is needed or reassign to see that the tasks are accomplished.
- Evaluate the meeting. Give each person an opportunity to offer feedback and discuss how these suggestions could be implemented.
- Keep accurate and concise minutes and distribute them to everyone.

9. Post on the parent bulletin board the agenda and minutes of board meetings, so everyone knows what is being discussed and what the Board decided.
10. Send monthly director's reports to Board members. These can include past minutes, financial reports, daily attendance reports and information on current and upcoming business.

Benefits:

- Parents who accept a decision making role in their child's day care program demonstrate a willingness to share responsibility for what happens to the program.
- The network of contacts in the community is greatly increased by establishing a Parent Board.

- An active Parent Board is knowledgeable about the program and able to support it in times of crisis (as in funding negotiations).
- Providers are able to share the responsibility of running a program and are less likely to burn out.

Problems:

- Parents don't have time to come to meetings and assume responsibility.
- It takes a lot of work to coordinate and nurture an effective Board, and providers are already too busy.
- Board members lose interest and participation wanes.
- Parents who are not given real responsibility and power may lose interest.

Solutions:

- Minimize the number of meetings. Much of the Board's work can be accomplished by small committees and by telephone.
- When you do meet, ensure that the meetings are efficient and enjoyable.
- Ensure that one person is willing to assume responsibility to make the Board work and to follow up on decisions.
- Build trust and morale by showing appreciation for work completed, listening to all viewpoints, being organized and prepared, and following through.
- Delegate **real** responsibility to parents and committees. For example, the Personnel Committee can help by recruiting, screening, interviewing, evaluating, and recommending new staff.

Requirements/ Resources Needed: Parents committed to the day care program. Interested individuals.

RESOURCES

THE EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

A good example of Parent Boards can be found in the Extended Day Programs in Brookline, Massachusetts. The after-school programs are housed in public schools but organized and run by Parent Boards. Each school program has its own Board composed of the school principal and parents. Boards are responsible for initiating, developing, and administering the after-school program. They establish tuition rates, hire staff, determine eligibility, and are responsible for the curriculum. Each Parent Board works closely with its school principal (who is a voting member of the Board), interviews prospective staff, and makes recommendations for hiring. Because parent involvement is so extensive, parents burn out easily, and there is a high turnover on Parent Boards. While the transition to a new Board may present difficulties, it ensures that parents share the responsibilities; new parents bring new ideas to the program.

The after-school programs are legally "sponsored" by the public schools as Extended Day Programs in order to meet the licensing requirements of the state. These requirements are designed for preschool programs and would have made the school facilities available if the programs applied for a license as a "day care program." Children are offered a choice of activities, including sports, gym, swimming, creative movement, arts and crafts, drama, music, trips, and carpentry. Decisions about the program content are made by the staff and parents with the underlying goal of providing a warm, cozy environment for the children with a variety of educational and recreational activities. Space to "do nothing" is also offered, as well as quiet periods and naps for younger children.

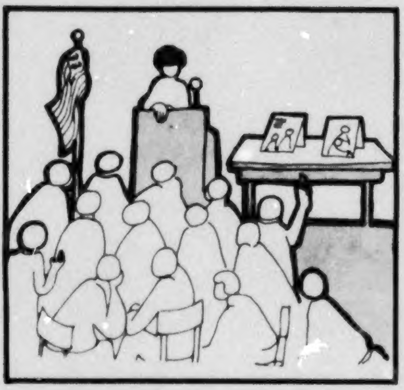
School principals and parents alike are enthusiastic about the program. The Superintendent of Schools feels the program has brought the parents into the public schools and that this involvement has ramifications beyond their involvement in after-school care. "This builds up a constituency of parents who feel that they have a direct, vested interest in the public schools. Parents are very concerned about the quality of adult contact of this day care for their children. Were the schools to run it, you wouldn't have that vested interest."*

Information and assistance in setting up an after school program can be obtained from the School-Age Child Care Project at Wellesley College. They are currently preparing a manual designed to help groups, especially parents, who want after-school programs for their children. The project is also initiating demonstration programs in eight sites across the country with the specific intention of helping other groups to organize programs in their communities.

For more information, contact:

School-Age Child Care Project
Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
828 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02181
(617) 235-0320, Ext. 785 or 781

*James A. Levine. **Day Care and the Public Schools.** Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc., 1978.



PARENT/PROVIDER ADVOCACY GROUPS*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition: Organizations of child care providers, parents, and interested individuals who band together for the purpose of improving the quality of child care programs. They often emerge in crisis periods and then become comprehensive support systems offering information and referral, training, toy and equipment libraries, as well as advocacy.

Goal: To advocate for day care generally and the program in particular.

Steps:

1. Identify a small number of people who share the same concerns and who may be fighting the same battles.
2. Talk informally with these people and use them as a core group. Discuss other people or organizations who might be involved.
3. Plan a general meeting and have the core group invite others.
    - Discuss the purpose of calling the group together and the ideas generated by the core group.
    - Encourage participants to share their concerns and needs and list the ideas.
    - Set priorities on the list of needs, identifying which ones the group will address first.
    - Focus on one issue that the group feels is attainable.
    - Brainstorm how to address the issue identified.
4. Develop strategies.

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*This model was not pilot tested. Therefore no demonstration data are available.

- Identify what tasks need to be done and who will do them. Give specific tasks to people and set deadlines.

5. Develop a systematic approach to handling a crisis so that the group becomes more organized and effective. Do this by establishing:
    - clearly defined goals and objectives;
    - strong allies—finding people in the legislature who are friendly to your cause;
    - a knowledge of where to apply pressure, and how;
    - timetables for action.
6. Identify and teach the group effective techniques in influencing legislators and government officials in a crisis situation. These techniques include:
    - telephone calls,
    - individual letters,
    - telegrams,
    - visits,
    - testimony at hearings, particularly by parents,
    - use of the mass media.
7. Publicize your story and your successes.
    - Learn to use the media for public relations.
    - Spread the word on day care.
8. Assess changing needs as the organization grows.
    - Consider incorporating as a nonprofit group.
    - Keep membership in touch with each other; for example, with a newsletter.
    - Seek funds from membership, foundations, and local businesses.

- Broaden your base of people involved, e.g., churches, business leaders.
- Serve as a resource for members and their community by providing information and referral.

Requirements/ Resources Needed:

- Parents
- Providers
- An office, coordinator, and volunteer staff, depending on the size of the organization.

Benefits:

- Day care providers and parents of young children are often the most isolated groups and can benefit greatly by forming alliances.
- A well organized group is more effective than individuals in handling the legislative and funding battles that often confront day care providers.
- Providers and parents can share resources:

  —joint sponsorship of training programs;

  —toy and equipment lending libraries;

  —support groups;

  —information and referral services for parents seeking day care.
- The quality of day care is improved.

Problems:

- It takes a lot of work to organize and coordinate such a diverse group.
- While members have many goals in common, they often have their own set of priorities.
- You need funds to establish a central location and hire a coordinator.
- Interest and participation tend to wane after a crisis has been solved.

Solutions:

- Distribute the responsibilities. Try to find volunteers who have a strong interest in child care.

- Establish a Board of Directors elected by the members and have them set priorities.
- Charge membership dues, hold fundraising events, and contact local foundations and businesses for grants.
- Develop other services which will provide ongoing benefits for grants.

RESOURCES

WASHINGTON CHILD DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Washington Child Development Council (WCDC) is a grass roots advocacy organization originally set up in 1973 by providers in the District of Columbia who were tired of fighting one crisis after another. It now includes parents, family home providers, day care staff, and interested community people. WCDC employs an executive director and is governed by its members. The Board of Directors, elected by the membership, includes 12 child care directors, nine parents, nine staff members, and nine interested persons.

WCDC is now a multifaceted organization with several components:

Advocacy. WCDC supports its members in working to improve services for children and families by assisting and arranging for parents and providers to testify at hearings on legislation that will affect the day care community; by conducting voter registration drives to ensure that parents have greater political influence; and by forming networks with other groups across the country that are working to improve the lives of children and families.

Information and Referral. WCDC provides parents with an up-to-date listing of licensed and operating centers as well as personal assistance in locating a center appropriate for their needs. Services are also available for individuals or businesses who want to set up a center or family home. WCDC is the best source of up-to-date information on day care issues and is often consulted by the news media and others.

Publications. In addition to a newsletter which goes to all its members, WCDC develops its own publications, responding to needs identified by the membership. Task forces are set up by the Board to work on particular publications, and then the manuscripts are completed by the staff. Because these publications grow out of experience and strongly felt needs, they are practical and of immediate benefit to parents and providers. WCDC has published a **Self-Assessment Guide** (available at $7.50 per copy including postage and handling) to help providers evaluate their own progress. They are currently completing a **Parent Guide to Finding Child Care in Washington, D.C.** and a guide to **Working With Handicapped Children In Day Care.**

Mediation. The Executive Director of WCDC has served as a mediator in disputes or as a facilitator to help members achieve their goals. Recently, WCDC "prepped" a parent group, which met with the School Board to initiate an after-school program in the public school.

For information contact

Bobbi Blok
Washington Child Development Center
2121 Decatur Place, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20008
Phone: 202/387-0002

CHAPTER 6. A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCES

This bibliography contains an up-to-date listing of parent involvement books, pamphlets, training materials, program manuals or reports, and similar resources pertinent to topics discussed in this Provider Resource manual. It is divided into three sections, to facilitate the reader's quick and easy reference. Pages 115 - 118 describe general parent involvement resources. Parenting, or Parent Education resources are described on pages 118-121. Resources related to Parent and Provider Advocacy can be found on pages 122 and 123 of this bibliography.

In addition, a listing of parent involvement, parent education and child advocacy resource organizations is included on pages 123 - 125.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCES

Bergstrom, Joan M., and Joy, Linda. **Going to Work? Choosing Care for Infants and Toddlers? A Parent Guide**. Day Care Council of America, 1602 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20009, 1981.

The booklet provides general guidelines for assessing caregivers and child care environments to assist parents in selecting quality in home, family day or center based care for infants and toddlers.

Cansler, Dorothy P.; Martin, Gloria H.; and Valand, Mary C. **Working With Families.** Kaplan Press, 600 Jonestown Road, Winston-Salem, NC, 27103, 1976.

A resource manual designed to assist staff in improving parent participation in the child development center. (Although the manual specifically addresses parent participation in programs serving handicapped children, most suggestions are applicable to all child development programs.

Coletta, A.J. **Working Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement**. GA: Humanics Limited, 1182 West Peachtree, Atlanta, GA 30309, 1977.

This practical guide explores the nature of parent involvement and highlights some strategies providers can use in increasing the amount of cooperation between home and the child development.

Duff, Eleanor R.; Hobson, Carol; and Swick, Kevin; **Building Successful Parent-Teacher Partnership**. Humanics Limited, 1182 West Peachtree, Atlanta, GA 30309, 1980.

A handbook containing a comprehensive plan for implementing a successful parent involvement program.

Fund Raising By Parent/Citizen Groups. National Committee for Citizens in Education, Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green, Columbia, MD, 21044, 1977.

A basic step by step guide to fund raising activities. Topics covered include developing a fundraising plan, cultivating donors, proposal writing and forming a tax exempt organization.

Henniger, Michael. **Parent Involvement in Education: A Bibliography** (ED 174352) ERIC Document Reproduction Service, Computer Microfilm International, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA 22210, 1979. (Available in paper copy or microfiche)

A comprehensive annotated bibliography of parent involvement in education resource materials.

Honig, A.S. **Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Education**. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009, 1972.

This book provides a foundation for understanding the need for parent involvement in day care and presents information to help parents and providers work together more effectively in meeting children's needs.

Kuykendall, Crystal. **Developing Leadership for Parent/Citizen Groups.** National Committee for Citizens in Education, Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green, Columbia, MD, 21044, 1976.

A handbook designed for parent leaders and staff working with parent groups. Leadership styles, making the group work and motivating others are key issues discussed.

Mattick, Ilse, and Perkins, Frances J. **Guidelines for Observation and Assessment: An Approach to Evaluating the Learning Environment of a Day Care Center**. The Day Care and Child Development Council of America, 1972. (Distributed by Gryphon House, Inc., P.O. Box 217, Mt. Rainier, MD, 20712)

A guide on how to evaluate a day care setting through observation. It outlines three broad, observable categories: physical setting, interactional setting (relationships), and program. Within each category, specific questions or elements to focus on are presented.

McSpadden, Lucia Ann. **Head Start Day Care Center**, 615 South 3rd Street East, Salt Lake

City, UT. Reprinted by the Day Care and Child Development Council of America, 1602 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20009, 1982.

An easy to digest description of an ongoing evaluation process for day care programs developed and used by parents, staff and administrators at the Head Start Day Care Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. Describes how the process was put in place and the process in action.

Meyers, G.E. and Myers, M.T. **The Dynamics of Human Communication: A Laboratory Approach**. McGraw Hill, Inc., New York, NY, 1973.

This comprehensive textbook explores in detail the essential elements of human interaction and communication. It provides practical information on ways to improve the communication process. (Useful in improving parent/staff communication.)

Morrison, George S. **Parent Involvement in the Home, School and Community**. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, OH, 1978.

This comprehensive book explores the whys and hows of parent involvement. It looks at home based programs, programs for parents with handicapped children and parenting programs.

Nirenberg, J.S. **Getting Through to People**. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NY, 1975.

This book examines the nature of communication and highlights the common stumbling blocks which prevent individuals from communicating effectively with one another. (Useful in improving parent-staff communication.)

Rich, Dorothy, and Jones, Cynthia. **A Family Affair: Education**, The Home and School Institute, Trinity College, Washington, DC, 20017, 1977.

Outreach strategies from school to home, home learning activities and home learning systems such as the Home Report Card system and the Turning TV Viewing into Doing system are described. A review of research and projects around the country that validate the home and family as critical factors in children's educational achievement.

Rich, Dorothy, and Mattox, Beverly. **101 Activities for Building More Effective School-Community Involvement**. The Home-School Institute, Trinity College, Washington, DC, 20017, 1976.

The publication contains a vast assortment of practical activities for school/community leaders and teachers to use in the gap between the school or child development center, the home and the community. Categories of activities include communicating the word from school to home, developing the home as an educational "institution", utilizing community resources, volunteers in the classroom, and fund raising.

Rood, Larry. **Parents and Teachers Together. A Training Manual for Parent Involvement in Head Start Centers**. Day Care and Child Development Council of America, Inc., 1602 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, 1970.

A manual consisting of training exercises to assist groups of parents and staff in working together in Head Start and other child development programs.

Rood, Larry, and Curry, Leah J. **The Head Start Parent Handbook**. Gryphon House, P.O. Box 217, Mt. Rainier, MD, 20712, 1982.

A basic description of parent involvement in Head Start including parent involvement guidelines and a description of the avenues of participation in Head Start.

PARENTING RESOURCES

Baratta-Lorton, Mary. **Workjobs for Parents**. Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., Reading, MA: 1975.

Workjobs For Parents is a comprehensive resource manual which clearly describes 43 "work-jobs" or learning activities for parents to make and use with their 3 through 6 year olds. For each activity, the author delineates the materials needed, skills gained, ways to get the activity underway and how to follow up the activity.

The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, **Ourselves and Our Children, A Book by and for Parents**. Random House, New York, NY, 1978. (Also distributed by Gryphon House, P.O. Box 217, Mt. Rainier, MD, 20712)

A frank exploration of topics such as whether and when to become a parent, pregnancy, adoption, child rearing, and different forms families can take. Resources of professional and lay help for parents to turn to is also included.

Brown, Susan, and Kronhauser, Pat. **Working Parents: How To Be Happy With Your Children.** Humanics Limited, 1182 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA, 30309, 1977.

This publication focuses on assisting working parents to improve the quality of time spent with their children; different child rearing approaches, the importance of suitable child care arrangements, child care related problems, and activities for the parent and child to work on together are discussed.

Burtt, Kent Garland, and Kalkstein, Karen. **Smart Toys for Babies From Birth to Two.** Harper and Row, New York, NY. (Also distributed by Gryphon house, P.O. Box 275, Mt. Rainier, MD, 20712)

Each chapter of this book discusses the interest and ability of babies in a certain age range and the toys most appropriate for them. (More than 70 toys to make for babies and toddlers are described.)

Comer, J.P., and Poussaint, A.F. **Black Child Care: How to Bring Up a Healthy Black Child in America, A Guide to Emotional and Psychological Development.** Simon and Schuster, New York, NY, 1975.

A handbook for parents of Black children offering advice on helping children to develop emotional and psychological well being in a racist social environment.

Crary, Elizabeth. **Without Spanking or Spoiling: A Practical Approach to Toddler and Preschool Guidance.** Parenting Press, 7750 31st Avenue, NE, Seattle, WA 98115, 1979. (Also distributed by Gryphon House, P.O. Box 217, Mt. Rainier, MD, 20712)

This book offers parents alternatives to spanking or spoiling by showing parents how to substitute acceptable behaviors for unacceptable ones and how to identify and use effective consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Families Learning Together at Home and in the Community, Building Adult Knowledge and Children's Skills. The Home and School Institute, Trinity College, Washington, DC, 20017, 1980.

This home learning program of **practical** activities for children aged 5-12 and their parents uses the kitchen, the supermarket, and the neighborhood as learning environments. The activities provide useful information to adults in life skills while giving children practice in math, reading and attitudes needed for success.

Family Living. ERIC Clearing House on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. College of Education, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL, 61801, 1980.

A set of 24 one-page bulletins dealing with a variety of topics such as child development and "Children's Feelings", "Understanding Behavior." (Useful for distributing to parents.)

Fraiberg, Selma H. **The Magic Years: Understanding the Problems of Early Childhood.** Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 1959.

This book relates the child's emotional and psychological development from birth through six years to adult in an engaging and comprehensible manner.

Gordon, Ira. **Baby Learning Through Baby Play: A Parent's Guide for the First Two Years.** St. Martin's Press, 175 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10010, 1970. (Also distributed by Gryphon House, P.O. Box 217, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712)

This book provides parents with simple games to play with their babies and toddlers to help stimulate intellectual development.

Green, Martin, I. **A Sign of Relief, The First Aid Handbook for Childhood Emergencies.** Bantam Book, Inc., 666 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10019, 1977.

The prevention of childhood accidents, emergency and first aid procedures are delineated in this book.

Haas, Carolyn B. **The Big Book of Recipes for Fun, Creative Learning Activities for Home and School.** CBH Publishing, Inc., 464 Central, Northfield, IL, 60093, 1980.

A comprehensive activity book containing arts and crafts recipes, learning games, indoor-outdoor games, science activities, and cooking and holiday ideas for children aged 4-12 and their parents to explore.

Haas, Carolyn B.; Cole, Ann; Weinberger, Betty K. **Recipes for Fun and Learning.** CBH Publishing, 464 Central Avenue, Northfield, IL, 60093, 1982.

A compilation of creative learning activities for children from preschool through second grade designed to help children think, create and learn through play and exploration.

Jones, Cynthia. **Home Learning Enablers Set I and II**. The Early Childhood Education Administration Institute, 1370 Canterbury Way, Rockville, MD, 20854, 1981.

These sets of 14 home learning activities are designed to encourage parental-child interactions. The activities are written up in easy to follow steps and are based on using household objects for teaching children. Parental feedback sheets are included in the packet to allow parents to inform the teacher of the child's response to the activity. (Set I is for children aged 3 to 4-1/2; Set II for 4 to 5-1/2 year olds.)

McLaughlin, Clara J.; Frisby, Donald R., MD; McLaughlin, Richard A., M.D.; and William, Melvin W., M.D. **Black Parents' Handbook**. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, NY, 1976.

An easy to follow parenting guide offering information on pregnancy, birth, and child care (0-6); the physical, emotional and mental well being of the Black child is addressed.

Parent Education (ED 167239). VA: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, Computer Microfilm International, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA, 22210, January 1978 (available in microfiche only).

A bibliography of ERIC documents and journal articles on child rearing, child development, health and school performance.

Rich, Dorothy and Jones, Cynthia. **The Three R's Plus: Teaming Families and Schools for Student Achievement.** Trinity College, Washington, DC, 20017, 1978.

The publication consists of home and centered learning activities designed to help parents develop children's creative thinking, reading, writing and math skills. Activities for preschoolers through junior high students are included.

Sattes, Beth, and Lawhon, Dell. **Parenting Materials Catalog,** Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV, 25325, 1978.

A comprehensive catalog of audiovisual parenting and family living materials. Materials listed are described in detailed and evaluated in terms of technical quality and content.

Sparling, Joseph, and Lewis, Isabelle. **Learning Games for the First Three Years**. Berkley Publishing Corporation, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 1979.

One hundred games are described and grouped according to six month age spans of children over the first three years.

Special Education Index to Parent Materials. National Information Center for Educational Media, University of Southern California, University Park-RAN, Los Angeles, CA, 90007, 1980.

This index describes 2,580 materials that are specifically useful for parents of handicapped learners. The content of these materials includes learner materials for home instruction, information materials for parents, and professional materials about parents and parent relationships.

Wolfgang, Charles; MacKender, Bea; and Wolfgang, Mary E. **Growing and Learning Through Play, Activities for Preschool and Kindergarten Children.** McGraw Hill, Inc., New York, NY, 1981.

The value of play for young children is discussed and over 100 activities which stimulate the socio-emotional, intellectual and physical growth of children are described.

ADVOCACY RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND PROVIDERS

America's Children and Their Families: Basic Facts. Children's Defense Fund, 1520 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20036, 1979.

The booklet provides a simplified description of the state of children and families in America today. Important facts on family types, children in poverty, child health, education, child care and inequality between Black and white children's conditions are stated.

Anatomy of a Hearing. D.C. League of Women Voters, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20036, 1972

Guidelines for assisting citizens to present information effectively in public hearings are discussed.

Franzel, Donna. **Advocacy for Day Care: From Sandbox to Soapbox.** The Day Care Council of America, Inc., 1602 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20009, 1982.

The focus of the handbook is assisting day care directors, staff, parents and board member to be articulate advocates for day care, children, and families. Topics covered include techniques for making your case, establishing productive relationships and gaining the support of legislators, and essential elements for effectively communicating through letter writing.

It's Time to Stand Up for Your Children: A Parent's Guide to Child Advocacy. DC: Children's Defense Fund, 1520 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C., 20036, 1979.

An action oriented booklet that explains the "whys and hows" of child and family advocacy in a direct comprehensible manner.

Public Action Kit. D.C. League of Women Voters, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20036.

This kit describes how to organize and obtain support for public action goals.

Schimmel, David, and Fischer, Louis. **The Rights of Parents in the Education of Their Children.** National Committee for Citizens in Education, Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green, Columbia, MD, 21044, 1977.

The book identifies and discusses the legal rights that parents have in the education of their children from kindergarten through high school.

Tell It to Washington. D.C. League of Women Voters, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20036, 1981.

The booklet contains information on lobbying effectively and how and when to contact legislative representatives.

LISTING OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT, PARENT EDUCATION AND CHILD ADVOCACY RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

Action for Children's Television, Inc
46 Austin Street
Newtonville, MA 02160
(617)527-5870

Association for Childhood Education International
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016
(202)363-6963

Bank Street College of Education
610 West 112 Street
New York, NY 10014
(212)663-7200

Bilingual Education Service Center
500 Dwyer Avenue
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
(312)870-4100

Children's Defense Fund
1520 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202)483-1470

The Children Foundation
1420 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
(202)347-3300

Day Care and Child Development
Council of America, Inc.
1602 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202)745-0220

Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 01260
(617)969-7100

ERIC Clearing House on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
College of Education
University of Illinois
805 West Pennsylvania Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801
(217)333-1386

Family Service Association of America
44 East 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010
(212)674-6100

Home and School Institute, Inc
Trinity College
Washington, DC 20017
(202)466-3633

Institute for Development of Home-School Programs
Merrimack Education Center
101 Mill Road
Chelmsford, MA 91824
(617)256-9225

Institute for Responsive Education
775 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617)353-3309

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202)232-8777

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National Black Child Development Institute, Inc.
1463 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202)387-1281

National Committee for Citizens in Education
Suite 410
Wilde Lake Village Green
Columbia, MD 21044
(301)997-9300

Parents Anonymous
22330 Howthorne Blvd.
Torrance, CA
(800)421-0353

Parents Without Partners, Inc.
International Office
7910 Woodmont Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301)654-8850
(800)638-8078

APPENDIX

SAMPLE BABYSITTING COOPERATIVE WILLISTON, N.D.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

The name of the organization shall be WILLISTON SITTERS CO-OP, its purpose being to offer to its membership an emotionally stable environment for their children when cared for outside of their home.

ARTICLE II

Qualification of Membership

A. There will be a maximum of 30 members in the co-op.

B. A prospective member must be highly recommended by a member in the co-op.

C. All members must live in the city of Williston.

ARTICLE III

Officers and their Election

A. The Office of the co-op shall be as follows: Chairwoman, Vice-Chairwoman and the Timekeeper.

B. The officers of the co-op and one alternate shall make up the Review Board; an alternate shall be elected at the regular election.

C. The Review Board shall serve as the Nominating Committee for officers who shall be elected in May, tenure beginning in September.

ARTICLE IV

Meetings of the co-op

A. Meetings shall be held the third Wednesday at 7:00 pm every two months.

B. Members shall hostess meetings in voluntary order.

ARTICLE V

Amendments to the Constitution

A. The Amendment must be submitted at the previous regular meeting.

B. A vote of two-thirds of the members present is required to adopt amendment.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

Duties of Officers

A. Chairwoman

1. One year tenure.
2. Presides over meetings of membership and Review Board.
3. Keeps a waiting list of prospective members.
4. Notifies member of her dismissal.
5. Keeps a record of hostesses and timekeeper.
6. Acts as treasurer when necessary.
7. Shall act as a telephone committee along with hostess and vice-chairwoman notifying members of meetings at least three days in advance.

B. Vice-Chairman

1. One year tenure.
2. Presides when chairwoman is absent.
3. Keeps an attendance record and calls roll at meetings.
4. Keeps accurate minutes of regular meetings of the membership and Review Board.

C. Timekeeper

1. Two month tenure.
2. Records debit and credit hours.
3. Balances a timesheet each month for each member.
4. Reminds any member when she has not used the club two weeks prior to closing of the timesheet.
5. Shall keep records in timekeeper's book for one year.

ARTICLE II

Duties of the Review Board

A. The Review Board shall meet at their convenience when necessary.

B. Any excuse brought to the attention of the chairwoman shall be presented at the time.

C. It shall decide upon any issues pertaining to enforcement off the By-Laws of the Co-op.

D. The Board shall have the power to dismiss any member who does not comply with the rules as stated in the Constitution and By-Laws with a majority vote of those present.

ARTICLE III Requirements of Membership

**A. Members must give at least five hours in two months; if impossible to do so, inform the Board.

B. May have one unexcused absence from regular meetings.

  **1. Two unexcused absences will result in dismissal from the Co-op.
  2. It is the member's responsibility to report her excuse to the Chairwoman or Vice-Chairwoman prior to the meeting missed.

C. A member leaving the Co-op with debit hours must pay the Chairwoman $1.00 per hour owed to be debited among the members.

D. A member leaving the club with credit hours will have 60 days to dispense her hours at her own discretion or will forfeit them to be divided equally as possible among the members.

E. All prospective members must attend one meeting to become a member.

F. After the birth of a new baby, a member is entitled to inactive status for two months without penalty.

G. If a member misses a Co-op meeting, she is responsible for making arrangements to pick up her time sheet from the chairwoman.

ARTICLE IV Rules for Sitting

A. When engaging a sitter, indicate time of arrival and return; call if you will be late.

B. Be prompt!

C. Gadder is suggested to advise sitter if her children are allergic to anything or not allowed to have something.

D. Both sitter and gadder are required to inform each other of family illness at any time before they sit.

E. Sitter must not leave the house without advising gadder.

F. Husbands may sit with permission of gadder.

G. Gadder should leave number and address of destination, when possible, otherwise that of a relative or friend.

H. Only verbal discipline is allowed.

ARTICLE V

Rules on Time

A. Time of departure and return will be figured to the nearest quarter hour.

**B. Sitters must report time within one MONTH of the sitting or the Timekeeper will not accept the time.

C. An extra one-half hour is earned if the children are fed lunch; one extra hour for supper. This does not hold if the mother sends lunch/supper with the child.

D. A sitter may earn full time while sitting for more than one family simultaneously. House guests are considered a separate time.

E. No member may be debited or credited with more than **30** hours.

ARTICLE VI

Expulsion

A. Membership will be terminated by the Review Board after the second unexcused absence or if a member does not gad at least five hours in two months without an excuse.

B. If a sitter's actions are found to be detrimental to the welfare of any of our children by a gadder, a complaint should be made to the Review Board which will then make a recommendation to the membership; a vote of the majority of the members present can terminate the membership of the sitter in question.

**These rules will be enforced!!